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VOICES FROM NATURE

BY

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LURANAH HAMMOND.

VOICES FROM NATURE.

A VOLUME OF ORIGINAL POEMS

BY

LURANAH HAMMOND,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

REV. A. L. MORSE, M. S.

HE ALSO CONTRIBUTES AN ORIGINAL POEM,
ENTITLED

AFTER FIFTY YEARS.

THE TRADE SUPPLIED BY
LURANAH HAMMOND, STRONG'S PRAIRIE P. O., WIS.

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INTRODUCTION.

By Rev. A. L. MORSE, M. S.

In writing the introduction to the poems of Luranah Hammond, rather than make elaborate comments upon the author or her poems, I prefer to give the reader the story of the poetic side of her life, in her own words, which reads like romance, and is as charming as a poem. By a series of questions, I drew from the author the following:

"I was born January 8th, 1840, in the Town of Solon, New York. My father's name was Nathan Hammond: my mother's maiden name was Pierce, and her father, William Pierce, was a Baptist preacher. I was the youngest of a family of three girls. Sarah was sixteen years my senior, and Mary five and a half years older than I. Mary was my intimate companion, and my earliest recollections are of playing beside the brooks and over the hills and meadows with her, happy in childhood's glee. In the spring of 1847, my father moved to Wisconsin, and settled in Evansville, Rock County, where, for nearly ten years, he followed the trade of miller. All of those years I was unable to attend school on account of poor health. My mother taught me all she was able, the rest of my education I received from Nature, and she was a very kind teacher to me. I seemed to hear her voice in the wind and trees, and the waves of the little brooks whispered and laughed, which was to me the sweetest of music. My father being a miller, I used to watch the water-wheel; and I loved to hear and see water dashed and foamed by the big water-wheel. It was a never-ending delight to watch it and listen to its voice. All living things, animals, birds, insects, etc., were my friends and companions, and I never tired of wandering about trying to

learn their wonderful ways, and talking to everything animate and inanimate as though it were able to understand me. I loved books, especially poetry. My favorite poets are Longfellow, Whittier, Scott, and Holmes. As early as twelve or thirteen, I wrote poems, but I was past the age of twenty before I ventured to send a piece to a publisher. My first poem was accepted, and it gave me courage to write more, and since then, for over thirty years, I have written poems, most of which have been anonymous.

"You wish to know under what circumstances I do my writing. My composing has mostly been done while at work, taking care of the children, cooking, washing dishes, etc. The time of writing my poems has often been after all in the house were asleep but myself. Some of my poems were composed when I was too sick to sit up, and my husband wrote them for me while I dictated. You ask me how I came to write some special poems. 'The Anchor,' for instance, I wrote to my oldest son when he was away from home and sick. 'The Little Step "Muver,"' was written because of an amusing speech of my little two-year-old girl. 'In Mother's Room,' was suggested by visiting the old house where my mother lived and in which she died. 'The Old Ferryman,' was suggested by a piece I read in a paper, as was also 'The Captive Maid.' 'Sister Susie,' I wrote for my sister-in-law, who was an invalid. But I can give no reasons for most of my poems, any more than I can for my dreams, for they come to me in much the same way, and at all odd times, and I have to write them down to get them off my mind."

There is an old adage which says, "Poets are born, not made," and the reader will find, by perusing this book, that the author has that natural, poetic genius that compels attention, awakens admiration, charms with brilliant imagery, occasionally amuses with fine flashes of humor, and always inspires with pure and lofty thoughts.

Believing her poems to be a helpful addition to good literature, and worthy of all students and lovers of Nature, and the music of Nature's myriad voices, I accordingly take pleasure in introducing to the reading public LURANAH HAMMOND.

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VOICES FROM NATURE.

(THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.)

Wildwood gifts to you I bring,
Songs that Nature sweetly sings,
Stolen notes of birds and bees,
Whispers of the greenwood trees;
Messages I sometimes caught
That the truant breeze had brought:
Sometimes spoken soft and low
Where the sweetest blossoms blow,
Often shouted loud and shrill
Over dale and over hill.
Brooks that babble o'er their stones,
Talking in an undertone;
Dashing torrents that rejoice
In their freedom and their noise
Speak to me from vale and wood,
Longing to be understood;
But, alas! I try in vain
To repeat the wild refrain.
Not to rhymes can I impart
Music dwelling in my heart.
Like the bow that spans the skies;

Like the mist-wreaths that arise,
Floating upward to adorn
And to crown the coming morn;
Like the dew-drops on each blade,
Glowing, trembling, half afraid
Of the sun's too ardent kiss
That transforms them back to mist;
Like to echoes ringing far,
Fainting, dying on the air;
Like the dreams that fade away
When our eyes unclose at day;
Like to each elusive thing
Are the gifts that I would bring.
Gone the glory; lost the tone
That I sought to make my own:
Hints of music that as yet
To no measured notes are set,
Though of glory all bereft
Still there may be something left;
Nature's voice is never still,
You may hear her if you will.

THE PET-EN-WELL.

NOTE.—Three miles east of Necedah, Wisconsin, on the banks of the Wisconsin River, there stands a lofty bluff, surmounted by numerous ledges of steep and ragged rocks. Tradition has given to this rocky cliff the name of "The Pet-en-Well," from an incident which occurred during the early settlement of the country. A white man, by the name of Peter Wells, was sentenced by the Indians to be burned at the stake He was hotly pursued by the Indians for his life, when he made his marvelous escape by fleeing to these rocks for refuge, and from that time he was never seen again.

Would you like to hear a story?
If you would, I'll try to tell
All about the Indian legend
Of the grand old Pet-en-Well.

Years ago, when few but red men
Cared these wild woods here to roam,
Came a white man from the eastward,
Seeking here a quiet home.

"Give me leave to tarry with you,
With your braves to hunt and smoke."
With his hand outstretched in friendship,
Thus the brave white hunter spoke.

Chiefs and braves all bade him welcome,
Smoked with him the pipe of peace,
In a solemn circle sitting
By their camp-fire 'neath the trees.

"Choose thy lodge," they said, "and tarry,
Hunt with us, and take thy rest;
While thou dealest fairly by us
Thou shalt be our honored guest."

Summer passed, and still he lingered;
Autumn leaves of gold and red
Drifted o'er the shady pathway
Where his footsteps often led.

Hither came the old Chief's daughter:
Bright-eyed, graceful Clinging Vine—
By the rock their troth they plighted,
'Neath the swaying Norway pine.

Oh! those meetings, sweet, but dangerous;
Happy moments on the sly;
What dreamed they of troubles brewing;
What cared they for by and by?

For they heard not stealthy footsteps,
Saw no dark form crouching near;
Yet the jealous Gray Wolf, listening,
All their loving words could hear.

Then he sought the Chief and told him
All he'd seen, and even more—
Till he saw the aged father
With fierce anger brimming o'er.

Said the Gray Wolf: "Once you promised
That your daughter should be mine,
But my lodge is cold and lonely,
Waiting for the Clinging Vine.

"Like a snake among our lodges
Crept the hunter here to spy;
He would steal our dearest treasure:
Great Chief, let the white man die."

"Be it so," the old Chief answered:
"To thy lodge my daughter take;
And the stranger we have cherished,
Let him perish at the stake."

Then the Clinging Vine in silence
Followed Gray Wolf to his tent,
Though she saw her hapless lover
Bound securely ere she went.

Gray Wolf, though a cunning warrior,
Could be fooled by maiden's wiles;
Ere the dawn he slumbered soundly,
Lulled by woman's artful smiles.

Then in haste she sought her lover;
Cut his bonds and set him free.
Swiftly then, like silent shadows,
From the Indian camp they flee.

Twinkling stars shone brightly o'er them,
Cooling dews upon them fell,
As they sped with noiseless footsteps
Toward the lofty Pet-en-Well.

Soon the war-cry, loud-resounding,
Told that foes were on the chase.
Faint their hopes, and vain their efforts;
They were losing in the race.

Up the rocks they swiftly clambered,
Thinking there, perchance, to hide;
But the keen-eyed, vengeful Indians
Soon their fleeing forms descried.

On the top the panting lovers
Paused to watch the coming foe.
"We are lost," they cry in anguish,
"For no farther can we go.

"In their hands we'll fall—no, never;
Better here together die.
Let us leap from off the summit,
Where the river rushes by."

Thus they bravely stood, undaunted,
Ready for the fatal leap,
When they heard the distant thunder,
As the Storm King woke from sleep.

Down he swept in all his fury;
O'er the rock he raged in might;
Cast his mantle 'round the lovers,
Hiding them from mortal sight.

Then the awe-struck, baffled Indians
From the dark clouds saw them rise,
Riding in the Storm King's chariot
Through the misty morning skies.

Hand in hand, unharmed, they vanished,
Drifting with the clouds away
To the Storm King's far dominions:
So, at least, the wise men say.

You may doubt this wild, uncanny
Story that to you I've told,
But remember that the Indians
Saw strange sights in days of old.

Even yet, when storms are raging,
And the winds are shrieking loud,
O'er the rocks they see the lovers,
Sailing on the driving clouds.

HOME AND MOTHER.

O, I dream of home and mother
When the nights are calm and still,
And I hear the plaintive calling
Of the lonely Whip-poor-will.
And at home again I'm resting,
In my bed beneath the eaves,
And I hear against my window
The oak tree's rustling leaves.

And I dream of home and mother
When the rain is falling down,
And I hear it patter, patter,
On the shingles old and brown:
I remember how it pattered,
When but half asleep I lay,
Listening to the soothing music
In that home so far away.

Dreams of home and mother soothe me
When the nights are chill and cold,
For I think I hear my mother
Coming as in days of old,
Just to draw the curtains closer,
And to tuck the blankets tight,
As she stooped to kiss me softly
When she said her last good night.

When I sleep, I dream of mother,
And I dream of her awake,
Then it is with tender sorrow
That my heart is like to break;
For in the far-off church-yard
Her grave is growing green,
And the ocean wide is rolling
Me and my home between.

But there's a Home more blessed;
The Home where mother waits.
Sometime my weary footsteps
Will reach the golden gates.
And when they open for me
How glorious it will seem
To find my home and mother,
And know it is no dream.

FLO'S SECRET.

" Grandma, dear, I have a secret;
Just last night 'twas told to me.
Can you guess who told it, Grandma?
Can you guess what it can be?"

Grandma dropped her ball of worsted,
Gazed at me and softly smiled.
" Yes," she said, " I know the story
Willie told to you, my child."

" Oh! how could you guess it, Grandma?
Willie spoke so very low."
" Just because it was the story
Grandpa told me years ago."

" But I could not speak, dear Grandma,
So the answer you can't know."
" Eyes can talk, and blushes answer,
Just the same as years ago."

" Willie called me ' love ' and ' darling,'
' Pet ' and ' precious little Flo '—
Was he silly?" " Yes," said Grandma,
" So was Grandpa years ago."

"Grandma, shall I leave my parents,
Home and friends, with him to go?"
Grandma wiped her misty glasses,
As she answered, soft and low:

"Yes, my birdie, if you love him.
Birds must mate and build, I know.
That's the way that I and Grandpa
Loved and builded long ago."

THE OLD GRIST-MILL.

"Once on a time" a little girl
Lived by an old grist-mill;
There many happy days she passed
With jolly Cousin Will.

And in and out the dusty mill,
And up and down the race,
They played, as happy as the birds
That sung about the place.

But now the mill is torn away,
The race and pond are dry;
Where once their boat skimmed o'er the waves
The grass is growing high.

The water-wheel that used to turn
So busy all the day
Now broken lies among the weeds,
Fast going to decay.

The miller, too, is dead and gone—
We'll see, oh! never more,
His dusty form and happy face
Within the old mill door.

And where are they, the happy twain,
Whose hearts were full of joy?
Oh! can it be I am that girl,
And you that little boy?

Ah well! my dear, we're growing old,
The truth I'll not deny;
But still I'm glad you were that boy,
And the little girl was I.

Though Time has robbed us of our youth
And turned our dark locks gray,
The mem'ry of that dear old mill
He cannot steal away.

WHERE FAIRIES DWELL.

The sages wise and learned tell
That on earth no fairies dwell;
That they ne'er were seen.
But 'twas only yesternight,
While I sat where moonbeams bright,
Glimmered o'er the green,

That a voice from somewhere near
Said in accents sweet and clear
As a silver bell:
"Mortal, with a poet's soul,
You are given to behold
Where we fairies dwell."

Then two hands passed o'er my eyes,
Like the wings of butterflies;
When I looked again,
Tiny fairies could be seen
Skipping o'er the mossy green,
Thick as summer rain.

Fancy, now, you are with me,
Seeing all that I did see;
As it all occurred;
For the picture was complete,
And the music very sweet—
Would you could have heard.

By a rose the queen doth stand,
With a scepter in her hand—
On her head a crown.
And her queenly robe of lace
Falls in folds of dainty grace,
Trailing on the ground.

Some are dancing, some at play;
Couples here and there oft stray,
Talking low together.
What their whispering is about
I have tried but can't make out—
Maybe 'tis the weather.

On a rose's bended head
One has made her fragrant bed
And to sleep has gone.
In the breeze her hammock swings,
O'er her head a night bird sings
Lullabies till dawn.

There is one in bridal white
Gliding through the moonbeams bright
O'er the violet bed.
Dew-drops gleam upon her breast,
And a snow-white blossom rests
On her golden head.

One has caught two fire-flies,
And to harness them he tries
As they flit around.
And another takes a ride,
On a cricket's back astride,
Hopping o'er the ground.

Now the queen doth lift her hand;
Thrice she waves her silver wand,
Says, while all bow low:
"Do you hear the partridge drum?
Night is gone, the morn is come,
And we soon must go.

"So dismiss, each merry sprite,
And until to-morrow night
Softly hide away
In the moss-beds, and the buds,
Deep within the shady woods,
All the sun-bright day.

"Now, O mortal, fare thee well!
Thou hast seen where fairies dwell!"
Spake the fairy queen—
That you never more might doubt
Fairy forms are all about
In the woodlands green.

THE ANCHOR.

Love of home is like an anchor,
Holding firm and fast;
Waves may roll, and hearts may tremble
In the raging blast.

But this anchor holds you steady;
You'll outride the storm,
While the lights of home are gleaming
For thee bright and warm.

Though the mists of trouble thicken
As away you roam,
Loving hearts will keep the beacon
In the harbor, Home.

THE CAPTIVE MAID.

I.

The tourist, wandering up and down
In search of places of renown
Will never find a grander sight
Than fair Mount Pleasant's lofty height.
And if the rugged rocks you climb
You'll be repaid for toil and time
By scenes no artist could portray,
Nor poet's pen to mind convey.
Seen through the hazy autumn air,
The peaceful landscape stretching far,
The village hamlet, church and spire
By dying sunbeams touched with fire;
The pleasant fields, the silvery stream,
All seem like some enchanting dream.
Upon the ear there falls no sound
More startling than the shrill resound
Of whistling engines with their trains,
Rumbling across the far-off plains.
An Eden fair it seems to be,
Untouched by sin or misery;

Yet time has been when through these lands
The Indians roamed in savage bands,
And through the forests chased the deer,
And built their wigwam village here.
A tale I read, "once on a time,"
And visions now in rippling rhymes
Chase through my mind both night and day,
I cannot make them stay away;
I can no longer stand the riot,
They must be penned to keep them quiet.

II.

'Twas long ago, as it appears—
Perhaps it was a hundred years,—
When autumn, with a lavish hand,
Had gaily decked this lovely land,
And, like great monarchs, proudly stood,
Each gorgeous tree within the wood,
More richly dressed than kings of old,
In crimson, scarlet, green and gold.
The Giant Rock, old, stern and gray,
Looked, frowning, on the bright array,
Unconscious that a sportive vine
Around his head had dared to twine,
And in festoons of dainty grace
Flung crimson garlands in his face.

III.

Upon the mount's most rugged side
One Autumn day two scouts did hide.
Well sheltered in a shady spot,
They gaze upon the Wyandots,
Who, in the valley far below,
Fight mimic war with knife and bow.
Their savage games, their whoops and yells,
To these brave men a story tells;
By all these signs full well they know
In numbers vast, the heartless foe,
Ere many days, will rise in wrath
To sweep the settlers from their path.
Their stern brows darken o'er with gloom
When thinking of the dreadful doom
That waits the quiet settlement
That rests in peace and calm content
Beneath the bright October sun,
Trusting in fort and garrison—
Not dreaming that, unwarned, they all
By savage hands will surely fall.
The scouts, with throbbing hearts, now burned,
The foes' intentions they had learned;
And now they longed to be away,
They scarce could brook an hour's delay;
And yet it was a dangerous feat
To leave that high and safe retreat,

For down below, one side the mound,
There lay the busy Indian town.
The other side was worse by far,
For there the band of warriors were,
And 'roundabout on every side
They saw the dusky runners glide;
The very slimmest chance had they
From there unseen to make their way.
The noontide sun poured down his rays;
Consumed with thirst, they longing gazed
Upon Hockhocking's gleaming tide,
Which through the valley swiftly glides.
How cool, how sweet, the waters seem
That in the sunlight flash and gleam.
Still onward rolled the round, red sun,
Tireless as when he first begun
His morning race; still warm he glows
And scatters smiles on friends and foes.

IV.

Beside the stream, that day, there strayed
A poor, sad-hearted captive maid.
Day after day, for ten long years,
A slave, she toiled with bitter tears;
Night after night she'd bent the knee,
And prayed for help to set her free.

Her heart was sick with hope deferred,
And longings for a pleasant word,
For not a face this weary while
Had met her own with kindly smile.
To-day, on menial duties sent,
She left her hateful prison tent.
A hideous squaw beside her walked
And at her sorrows jeered and mocked;
But as the water side she neared
A welcome sight to her appeared.
One scout, compelled by raging thirst,
At last had braved, and dared the worst;
And as her eyes she lifted up,
She saw him drinking from a cup.
She had no time for sign or word,
Before the war-whoop loud was heard
From her companion's swarthy throat.
Ere on her ear had died the note
The scout seized both, and with a bound
Beneath the sparkling waves went down.
Alas! alas! and must she die
When hope and rescue seem so nigh?
She saw the dead squaw floating past,
Then found a chance to speak at last.
She told the scout, though dark her face,
She was not of the Indian race.
Few words sufficed the tale to tell;
They dare not stay, they know too well

The braves will soon be on their track;
They haste away, and look not back.
They speed away across the plain,
In hopes the sheltering mount to gain.
"I fear," the scout exclaims at length,
"This race will prove beyond your strength;
But do your best, and do not fear:
I will not leave you in the rear."
"Haste on," she cried, "with swifter pace,
I will not hinder in the race.
If Death o'ertakes us, you will find
I am not lagging far behind."
"Then swift it is," the scout replied,
As on they panted side by side.
"'Twas not for self I was afraid,
It was for you, brave-hearted maid."
On, on they go with labored breath,
Before them hope, behind them death.
The friendly rock looms up more near,
The foes are howling in the rear;
And now, behold! from off the mound
A score of painted imps look down,
And whoop and yell in fiendish glee,
So sure are they of victory.
Undaunted yet, they still pursue
Their way, with feet that almost flew,
Striving to reach the rocky cleft
Wherein the scout his friend had left.

This friend had watched with bated breath
The seeming hopeless race from death:
Unable to afford them aid;
Still fingering gun, and trusty blade;
Eager to use them on the foe
He heard above, and saw below.
They reach the mound, and clamber high,
While whistling arrows hurtle by.
But all unharmed they still ascend
Until they reach their waiting friend.
"This way," he cries, and helps to lift
The trembling maiden to the cliff;
And there she sees a snug retreat,
A safe and rocky fort complete.
Two ways there were, and only two,
To reach this hillside rendezvous.
One narrow passage, rough and steep,
Against a host, the scouts could keep;
But over on the other side
Across a chasm, deep and wide—
Twelve feet or so across, perchance,
'Twould seem enough to check advance—
A spur of rock stood out in sight,
Distant but half an arrow's flight.
And if the daring foes should leap,
And on this rock their foothold keep,
With hasty glance, the scouts perceive,
Their doom were sealed without reprieve.

These points of danger quickly scanned,
Beside the pass they take their stand,
Determined there to make a stay
And keep the savages at bay;
But, knowing well with whom they cope,
The scouts have very little hope.
They know their powder soon must fail
And numbers then will sure prevail;
But from their fate they do not shrink,
'Tis of the maiden now they think.
Too young and brave is she to die;
They beg her, while there's time, to fly.
"Go; say we took you 'gainst your will,
And brought you prisoner to the hill,
And that from us you fled away,
Preferring with their tribe to stay.
Haste; make your peace ere yet too late,
Nor share with us a bloody fate."
"I thank you much, kind friends," said she,
"For all your thoughtful care of me;
But urge not my return, I pray,
For, come what will, with you I stay.
Their prisoner never more I'll be;
'Tis freedom now, or death, for me.
All that I ask, if you should live
And I should not, is just to give
My sorrowing friends a brief account
Of how I died upon the mount."

"We'll say no more," they both replied;
"Your wishes shall not be denied.
Though we should fall, may Heaven defend
And save you from the dreadful end
That threatens now to close your life
'Mid scenes of bloodshed and of strife."

V.

The Indians gather thick and fast;
They swarm the mound, they crowd the pass,
To meet the deadly rifle ball;
And, dead or wounded, quickly fall.
Unable to endure the fire,
They find it wiser to retire.
Behind the rocks and trees they hide,
Surrounding them on every side.
"They gather fast, my little maid,"
The men exclaim; "we are afraid
For your dear life, for balls fly thick.
Go; seek a place of safety; quick!
Among the rocks go hide, and stay
As far from danger as you may."
The maiden slips away, and waits
With heart that wildly palpitates.
What can she do—she does not know—
But watch the fight go on below?

At length a welcome sight she spies:
Far down the rocks a warrior lies.
His warfare o'er, his last race run,
He needs no more his knife, nor gun,
Nor flask of powder that would prove
A boon to those besieged above:
She glides away, by all unseen,
And down a narrow, deep ravine,
With crouching form, she softly crept,
O'er shelving rocks, where one false step
Would hurl her to the depths below.
Exposed to fire from friend and foe,
She falters not; the place she gains
Where lies the Indian's grim remains.
She grasped the rifle of the brave,
His ammunition, too, and gave
A frightened glance on every side,
But none had yet her movements spied.
Concealed by shrubs and trees from sight,
She sought once more the rocky height:
Her daring object safe achieved,
She reached a nook, still unperceived,
Where she could overlook the foe
And scan the battle down below.
She sees the rock and knows that spot
Too soon will tempt the Wyandot.
She creeps more close, this point to guard,
Resolved she will not be debarred

From aiding, if the chance occurs,
With knife or gun, those friends of hers,
That now, unaided and alone,
Fight for her safety and their own.
She waits not long, for soon she sees
Three dusky warriors on their knees;
They creep and crawl along the ledge
And pause upon the outer edge
To gaze with caution through the screens
Of vines and brush that intervenes,
To hide their movements from the eyes
Of those they're hoping to surprise.
The maiden starts—her heart grows faint—
She sees a brave, besmeared with paint;
A cruel, crafty Shawanee,
Whom she had hoped no more to see.
She knows this warrior at a glance,
And sees again, as in a trance,
The horrid scenes enacted o'er
That she had witnessed long before.
Again she hears her mother's screams
As from her breast the life-blood streams;
She sees her father, dying, fall.
This fiend it was who slew them all,
Both old and young, till none were left;
And she, of home and friends bereft,
Near crazed with grief, away was led,
A captive maiden, worse than dead.

All, all comes back; the grief and pain
A minute stupefies her brain,
And from her mind seems to efface
All thoughts of present time and place.

VI.

The weary scouts, so sorely pressed,
Have scarcely time to watch, much less
To guard this rock, toward which the foe
E'en now were crawling, sure but slow.
But, glancing upward, one espies
A dark and sinewy form arise,
Prepared to leap the deep abyss,
Or die if he the goal should miss.
Quick as a flash he sights his gun,
Determined that at least this one—
Though long the range for certain aim—
He'll do his best to kill or maim,
In hopes the braves who saw his fate
To try the same might hesitate.
He pulled the trigger, but, behold!
His gun missed fire, so we are told.
The flint had broke; in calm despair
He paused, the mischief to repair,
Yet knows before his old flint-lock
Can speak the brave will gain the rock.

"But they will find me here to greet
The first who reaches this retreat.
If I must die, 'twill ease my mind
To leave a few less fiends behind."
So spake the scout, the while in haste
He put another flint in place.
The maid perceives his dang'rous plight;
Her trance is broken by the sight.
Swift through the air her bullet sings;
It meets the warrior as he springs
Half-way across, 'twixt earth and sky,
His limbs grow cold, death dims his eye;
His wild, despairing cry rings out
Above the din of battle shout.
His friends above his movements trace
And watch his fall through empty space.
The soldiers, knowing help is near,
Send forth a welcome note of cheer,
But list in vain an answering cry;
No one they see; hear no reply.
Deep silence reigns; no sound or word;
A moment's space and then is heard
The whoops and yells and shouts once more,
More fierce and wild than e'er before.
Once more a brave—this same old chief
Who once had caused this maid such grief—
With motions swift and sudden bound
Assayed to gain that vantage ground.

Now, like an evil bird of prey,
He makes his leap and soars away.
Again is heard the rifle's crack,
A messenger is on his track
Which overtakes him ere he lands.
In vain he clutches with his hands
The brush and brambles on the edge,
He cannot cling upon the ledge,
And, while his eyes in terror rolled,
His feeble hands relaxed their hold.
He sounds his death-cry as he falls,
The woeful sound each heart appalls.
"Behold!" they say in whispers low,
"Bad spirits surely help our foe.
Only two white men can we see,
Yet balls fly fast from bush and tree.
We'll stay and watch them through the night
And in the morn renew the fight."

VII.

Night closes in o'er hill and plain;
Still in the cave the scouts remain.
The night wind through the forest leaves
Whispers and moans like one who grieves.
About the mound, far down below,
The Indians' watch-fires gleam and glow,

While stealthy foes, in shadows deep,
Around the cave their vigils keep.
"There is no hope," the white men sigh;
"Trapped like two wolves, we here must die.
Our powder and our balls are gone;
Those imps will know it, too, at dawn;
Then nothing will they have to do
But slay and scalp both me and you."
"Alas, my comrade! you are right.
I own the prospect is not bright;
For us there is no hope, I fear.
I'm glad the maiden is not here."
While yet they spoke, close by their side
They saw a shadowy object glide.
A low voice said: "Be not afraid;
'Tis only I, the captive maid!"
"You here!" they cry both in a breath;
"Why came you here to meet your death?
We thought that long ago you went,
And now were safe within your tent."
"And did you think that I would fly
And leave my rescuers here to die?
No, no, my friends; this frightful day
I've helped to keep the foes at bay.
Above you, 'mong the rocks, I stood
And watched, to help whene'er I could.
Now, in the darkness of the night,
From war we have a brief respite;

And, if you'll trust yourselves to me,
Ere morning dawns I'll set you free."
"A brave, unselfish maid thou art;
A friend, indeed, to cheer the heart;
But pardon, if your power we doubt
To guard us from the foes without."
"Trust me, I pray, as I have you,
And you that trust will never rue.
There's not a single foot of ground
I do not know, for miles around.
Their guards are watchful, well I know,
And every shadow holds a foe:
But yonder in the village street
No guards are stationed: we will meet
With none but squaws, or thoughtless youth,
Who never will suspect the truth.
They will not dream of this bold plan,
Nor think your faces close to scan.
Oh, brothers, do not hesitate;
The night wears on, 'tis getting late.
And death awaits you if you stay,
List to my plan and haste away."
"Lead on, we'll trust to you, fair maid;
To follow you we're not afraid,"
They quick reply in whispers low,
As softly from the cave they go
Like silent shadows, safely down
She leads them to the Indian town,

Then boldly onward through the street,
Unchallenged by the few they meet,
Who never dream the white men dare
Thus brave the lion in his lair;
And safely to the other side
'Neath friendly forest trees they glide;
While all night long there many a brave
Kept guard around the empty cave.
With thankful hearts they traveled on
In haste to reach the garrison.
At last they reach the little fort,
And gave the soldiers their report,
Who quickly hasten to prevent
The downfall of the settlement;
And thus was saved by those brave three
A bloody Indian massacre.

A LOVER BY THE BROOK.

Oh, bright, dancing, sparkling waters,
Stay one moment, stay!
Answer me a few short questions
Ere you haste away.
Tell me, dost thou not remember
One sweet, shady nook
Where in infancy you sported,
Just a tiny brook?

Hast thou not fond recollections
Of that lovely place?
And a bright-eyed, brown-haired maiden—
Darling little Grace?
Tell me, does she ever wander
To the moss-grown seat
Where we sat one summer evening,
Telling stories sweet?

Precious stories, told so often,
Yet forever new;
Does she love to sit there dreaming?
Bright waves, tell me true;
Curling waves that break and glisten
On the pebbly shore,
Does she tell her secrets to thee
As in days of yore?

Tell me, ere you hasten onward
To the far-off sea,
All the pretty, loving stories
She has told to thee.
Hast thou mirrored in thy bosom
Her dear face so sweet?
Hast thou laved her dimpled fingers,
Or her bare, white feet?

O, thou ever-hurrying waters,
Thou canst never go
Back to tell her all the sweet words
I would have her know.
So I'll send a little message
By the evening breeze
That is sighing like a lover
'Mong the willow trees.

When you see her, gentle South Wind,
Kiss her cheek for me;
Tell her, too, that I am coming
Her dear self to see.
Tell her, if she still doth love me,
And will come to look,
There she'll meet her own true lover
By the babbling brook.

THE OLD FARM-HOUSE

I wandered to the old farm-house,
That once was ours, dear Ray,
The same old house and garden still,
Though falling to decay.
I scarce could trace the garden path,
The weeds had grown so tall;
The gate was gone, and ivies rank
Grew o'er the broken wall.

The giant oak is standing yet
Beside the kitchen door;
Its rugged arms reach o'er the roof
A blessing to implore.
A low, sad wind moaned through the boughs
Like some old friend that grieves;
A shower of dew, like tear-drops bright,
Fell from its trembling leaves.

The well was dry, where years ago
We sought the cooling drink:
The mossy curb was draped with vines
That grew around its brink.
I trod once more the winding path
Down to the pasture gate,
But nevermore the meek-eyed cows
Our lagging footsteps wait.

The climbing rosebush by the door,
That mother loved so well,
Lies withered midst the grass and leaves
Where long ago it fell.
It missed the careful hands that trained,
And helped it thrive and grow.
How could it live when she was gone
Who nursed and loved it so?

My footsteps echoed long and loud,
As through the rooms once more
I wandered, sadly and alone,
Where oft I'd been before,
When rang the walls with merry songs,
And shouts of laughter gay;
Now of that happy band there's left
But you and I, dear Ray.

The play-room now looks smaller than
It did in days of yore,
Your face and mine, grotesquely drawn,
Grinned from the battered door.
I saw a slate, a broken chair,
A doll's head and a ball;
A tattered map in rusty frame
Still hangs against the wall.

So like a sad, unquiet ghost,
I wandered here and there,
From room to room, until at last
I climbed the winding stair.
With faltering steps I sought the room
Where darling mother died;
And there, dear Ray, to grief gave way
And sat me down and cried.

Upon a broken window-sill
I sat, while fell the tears
Of sorrow for the loved and lost—
Dear friends of childhood's years,
Who answer not my pleading call,
Nor greet me any more,
And never will until we meet
Upon that other shore.

TO SISTER SUSIE.

O, my sick and weary sister,
With your ever-patient smile,
Know you not your life's a poem,
Growing sweeter all the while?

Angels write the loving story,
Every day they add a line,
Till the life you deem so worthless
Down the pages brightly shine.

Hopeful, cheerful, grows the story,
Written by those scribes above,
Telling less of sin and sorrow—
Telling more of Jesus' love.

May the pages yet unwritten
Still the same sweet story tell
Of a quiet, meek submission
To our Heavenly Father's will.

When at length the volume's finished
And the last line written down,
Angels' hands will lead you homeward,
There to wear a golden crown.

Then you'll learn an All-Wise Father
Ordered all things for your good;
And your life, now like a riddle,
Will be clearly understood.

THE CENTENNIAL.

What changes in a hundred years
The hand of Time hath wrought,
Assisted by the hand of man,
And man's best servant, Thought!
Sweet peace now reigns instead of war—
We've friends in place of foes;
And the once howling wilderness
Now blossoms as the rose.

Where zephyrs in the twilight gloom,
A hundred years ago,
Heard in the tangled brake and brush
The panther purring low,
Or bore the sound of howling wolf,
Or Indians' yells afar,
Now hymns of thankfulness arise
Upon the evening air.

Where women sat beside their looms,
A hundred years ago,
And wove in cloth the threads they spun
Of linen, wool and tow,
Now great King Steam, in work shops large,
Like some old giant elf,
Gets up with angry puff and roar,
And does the work himself.

To the great Ruler of all lands
We lift our hearts in praise,
When back a hundred years we cast
A retrospective gaze,
And in an almost wilderness
An infant nation see
Beset by want, by foes oppressed,
Fighting for liberty.

The spirit of those heroes brave
Our being seems to fill,
And warms our hearts when thinking of
The fight on Bunker Hill.
We feel a glow of grateful pride
Whenever we recall
The Declaration that was signed
In Independence Hall.

First in our heart is Washington,
As first in war and peace :
His virtues crown him king, and give
To him a royal place.
All honor to the chieftain brave
And to his gallant band
That fought so long to win for us
This glorious Western land.

The post-boy once, with headlong speed
Bore news to those afar,
While overhead the carrier-dove
Flew past him high in air.
But lightning now our post-boy leaves,
Nor waits for carrier-dove;
But quick through ocean and through air
Brings news from those we love.

The poor old stage coach lumbered on,
A hundred years ago,
O'er rugged roads and mountains steep
Their progress was but slow.
Now, through the mountain's heart, and o'er
Deep chasms yawning wide,
With iron steeds, in palace cars,
How fearlessly we ride.

The streams that then unchecked dashed on,
Like coursers wild and free,
Now stay to turn the busy wheel
Ere mingling with the sea;
The ocean floats the steamship great
As o'er the waves she flies,
To visit lands across the seas
And bring us merchandise.

The bounteous heart of mother earth
Yields treasures rich and rare:
There's mines of gold and silver ore,
And other minerals there.
She yields us coal to make our fires
And keep our home-hearth bright
And from her veins pours floods of oil
To give the nations light.

The days of slavery are past—
Oppression's rule is o'er:
Then lift your voices loud and high—
We're free forever more!
Free as the breeze that lifts and floats
Our banner's starry folds:
Free as the eagle that from high
Our glorious land beholds.

O Lord, we own thy guiding hand
Hath led us all the way;
Grant us Thy favor evermore,
And bless us still, we pray.
And hear us as with humble hearts
Thy praise we try to sing,
And keep us evermore beneath
The shadow of Thy wing.

THE SWEET, LONG AGO.

Far away on an ever-green shore
Lies the land of the sweet, long ago,
Where the blossoms of spring never fade,
And the fierce winds of winter ne'er blow.

Chorus.

Oh, thou sweet long ago,
We have wandered so far from thy shore.
Oh, bright land of our youth,
We can never return any more.

There is naught in that land to annoy;
All its sorrows are gone like the mist
That afloat o'er the hill-tops at dawn
Fled away from the sun's ardent kiss.
Ch.

There are friends, oh, so tender and true,
Whose brows are ne'er shadowed by care;
And their voices in melody sweet
Echo yet from that land over there.
Ch.

Though we long for those joys once again,
Still with footsteps grown weary and slow
We are gliding, still gliding away,
From that land of the sweet, long ago.
Ch.

A SONG OF GLADNESS.

Oh, sing a song of gladness,
Ye comrades on the way:
Sing with the birds that warble
Their thanks at break of day:
Through pleasant ways and sunny
At day's dawn lies the road.
Then travel on rejoicing
And blithely bear your load,
And have no fear—
The home that seems so far at dawn
Will soon be near.

If noontime finds us weary,
We must not stop to sigh,
For home is on before us;
We'll reach it by and by:
Then sing a song of gladness
Although the way looks drear,
Above the clouds of sadness
The sun is shining clear.
Then do not grieve,
If home is not in sight at noon
'Twill be at eve.

Though rougher grows the pathway,
And steep the hills we climb,
We'll murmur not at trials
That last but for a time;
Nor will it keep our footsteps
From straying by the way
To dwell upon the sorrows
And sins of yesterday.
Then sigh no more
But keep your eyes upon the road
That lies before.

When evening shadows gather
The lights of home will glow
To light the dark'ning pathway
Our tired feet must go.
Oh, sweet will be the welcome
That meets us at the door,
And glad we'll pass the portals
To wander never more.
Oh Home so bright!
We'll reach the land of perfect day
When comes the night.

THE MUSIC OF THE BROOK.

Dear old brook, my childhood's playmate,
I've been haunted all day long
By the memory of thy ripples,
And the music of their song
I can see thy cool waves gliding
Darkly by the shady shore,
Breaking into smiles the moment
They have reached the light once more.

Tiny threads of golden sunlight,
Darker threads of sober shade,
Down the broken rocks go twisting
Into many a curl and braid,
Falling with a splash and spatter
On the smooth worn stones below,
Chasing into whirling eddies
Ships of foam, with sails like snow.

Dancing o'er the shining pebbles,
Whispering to the gleaming shells,
Telling where the water-spirit
In her gem-lined cavern dwells.
All night long the moonbeam arrows
Chase the stars, but all in vain,
In the waves the stars, like mermaids,
Hide to reappear again.

In the shallows by the willows
Sleepy ripples silent slip,
Where the fairies ride at anchor
In their water-lily ships,
And the iris o'er the rushes
Floats her banner's purple fold
Where, amid the ferns and mosses,
Gleams the cowslip's cup of gold.

Winding through the meadow grasses,
Where the cattle come to wade,
While they slake their thirst, and rest them
In the willows' grateful shade,
Lingering where the spicy birch tree,
Leaning downward, sways and dips,
Where the cool, caressing ripples
Bathe her fragrant finger tips.

Many weary miles divide us:
Many weary years have fled
Since I watched thy foaming waters
Dancing o'er their pebbly bed.
Still you come, sweet brook, to cheer me,
Singing with your silvery tongue
Just the same old gladsome music
That you did when I was young.

THE EMERALD ISLE.

Oh, I long to go back
To the Emerald Isle;
To the little low cot
Where I played when a child,
For I'm dreaming each night,
And I'm thinking each day,
Of the dear home I left
In that land far away.

I seem to be seeing,
Just forenenst the old home,
The bonny blue field
Of tall flax all in bloom;
The pathway all bordered
With shamrocks so green
That went winding away
To the home of Kathleen.

There's the precious old mother,
She sits in the sun,
And dreams of her boy
When her day's work is done;
And Nora, sweet sister,
She sings, soft and low,
The tender old songs
That we sang long ago.

And Kathleen, my sweetheart,
She is waiting this while;
Sure, she's calling me back
To the Emerald Isle.
I see her, I hear her,
When asleep or awake,
And it's back I will go,
Lest her tender heart break.

A TRIP TO THE CLOUDS.

"Stay, fairy clouds, now floating o'er,
Until your mysteries I explore;
In fancy's light balloon I haste,
Swift thro' the blue air's trackless waste.

"Ho! fairy cloudship, where away?
Whence has thou come since break of day?
The fairy-sailors, peeping out,
Answer our hail with merry shout.

"'We come from distant lands,' they sing,
'And sail by order of our king;
We travel fast, and travel far,
Our compass set by sun or star.

"'For it was only yesternight
We chased the sea-gulls in their flight;
And from the ocean's misty spray
We filled our cups and flew away.

"'We fill our fairy craft anew,
Each morn, with glittering drops of dew
That gold-winged fairies bring with care
Safe up the sunbeam's shining stair.

"'Then with each snow-white sail spread wide,
Around the earth our ships we guide;
On fruit and flower, on hill and plain,
Descend in gentle showers of rain.

"'When in the distant horizon
We moor our barques when day is done,
And in our sails the sunlight hold
Until they shine like burnished gold.

"'Our banners free are all unfurled,
Flaming above your lower world;
How mortals turn admiring eyes
Where fairy ships float through the skies.'

"Good-by, oh fairy boat and crew!
My trip is o'er: Adieu! Adieu!
My light balloon sinks slowly down;
Once more I touch the solid ground."

MY CHRISTMAS GUESTS.

On a dainty little table,
A dainty feast I spread,
Of cookies, cakes and cracker crumbs,
And bits of gingerbread.

The dining-room was beautiful,
So long and high and wide,
With evergreens and russet leaves
Adorned on every side.

When the little treat was ready
I sat me down to rest,
While I wrote a little story
About my Christmas guests.

But the bustle of arrivals
Put all my dreams to flight;
I could see them from my window
About the grounds alight.

Soon they gathered 'round the table,
Those merry guests of mine,
Who had come by invitation
On Christmas fare to dine.

There was nothing stiff, nor formal:
No ceremonious air,
But just a jolly company
Without a thought of care.

Oh, what a lot of chattering,
And speeches quite absurd,
No doubt, although I did not hear
Quite clearly every word.

When at last they'd cleared the table
Of every tiny crumb
They sang a pretty song and then
Went back the way they'd come.

Would you like to know the ditty
Those wee folks sang to me?
The tune was sweet, these were the words,
"Chick, chick a dee, dee dee."

GRANDMOTHER'S DREAM.

"Why are you so silent, dear Grandma?
Why gaze at the far-distant sky?
You smile, but there still is a wishful,
A far-away look in your eye.

"You ate but a mouthful this morning,
How hungry and faint you must be.
I'll make you some toast, dearest Grandma,
Run, Katie, and make her some tea."

"Dear children, don't worry about me,
Don't worry, Grandma is all right;
I only was thinking how strangely
I dreamed of your Grandpa last night.

"I dreamed that he came to me, smiling,
As natural as ever in life,
And reached out his arms, saying softly,
'It's time to go home, dearest wife.

"'I know that the children will miss you,
They'll mourn for you sadly, I fear;
So loving you've been, and so faithful,
For many a long, weary year.

" ' But now up in Heaven the angels
Are waiting to give you a crown.
They bade me come hither and call you :
So, wife, lay your burdens all down,

" ' And haste to the land of the blessed,
For there by the beautiful gate
The children you buried and mourned for
To welcome their mother now wait.'

" Then I said, ' I will go '—that woke me—
I was all alone in my room ;
A glimmering light shone around me,
Dispelling the darkness and gloom.

" And I heard—or thought I heard—music.
Whence came it I could not surmise.
So sweetly and soft it came stealing,
I listened in dreamy surprise.

" Perhaps I had only half wakened,
But it seemed, while I watched, that the light
Sailed away through the window and upward
Till lost in the shadows of night.

" And the music grew fainter and fainter,
And died in a tremulous sigh.
I listened in vain ; it had vanished
Like the light that went up to the sky.

"There, children, don't weep; I am here yet.
Why falleth those tear-drops so bright?
It was only a dream, but so pleasant
I wish I might dream it each night."

* * * * * *

Dear Grandmother's chair is now empty;
On earth we shall see her no more.
She followed the light and the music
Away to that beautiful shore.

Though gone, yet in dreams she is with us.
She comes with the same tender smile,
And whispers, "Be patient, dear children,
We will meet again after awhile."

THE GLEANERS.

Go, restless Thoughts, that cannot stay
Content to dwell in prison home,
But ever like the wild birds stray;
Forever like the free winds roam.

Fly far away like happy birds
Escaping from the fowler's snare;
Rise o'er the sorrows that enthrall;
Away from toil, away from care.

For we are weary, you and I,
Of city streets; its rush and roar,
And long for peaceful, quiet days
In happy country homes once more.

I could not keep ye if I would;
Up and away on tireless wing,
But come not empty-handed back,
From every land some treasure bring.

Though weary hands their tasks perform
And restless feet at home must stay,
O'er hills and dales, and ocean vast,
In search of pleasure, fly away.

Bring back to me the rippling rhymes
The laughing brook forever sings;
The sound of bells, the low of kine,
The songs of birds, make haste to bring.

Go where the wild waves clap their hands
And shout aloud in wanton glee;
Where sea-gulls scream and brave ships ride
Triumphant o'er the raging sea.

There is no depth ye cannot reach,
There is no height ye cannot climb;
The years are toys with which ye play;
Mere stepping-stones of Father Time.

With ease you rival in your flight
The lightning's flash across the sky,
Or you can linger in the clouds
And dream while slip the moments by.

Rich treasures from the Long Ago,
And gems of wisdom, rich and rare,
Go gather up along the way
And bring to me with greatest care.

With Hope I send ye on your way,
With Faith I wait your glad return,
For He who sees the sparrow's fall
Can all your wandering ways discern.

Then come, Oh gleaners, from the field
Come freighted back to me again:
With rhymes I'll bind the precious store
As reapers bind their sheaves of grain.

DOMESTIC HASH.

NOTE—Written as a dialogue for some students at school.

I write this dialogue in haste,
Thinking, perhaps, you'd like a taste
Of this domestic kind of hash.
An author, Mrs. Molly Dash,
Intent upon a sweet romance,
Writes on, like one bound by a trance,
Seeming unconscious that her spouse
In wrath is storming 'round the house.
She speaks the words which she indites,
To which her husband adds his mite
In language not so full of honey,
Which serves to make the rhymes more funny.

Wife. The stars shone bright in the heavens blue.
Husband. Wife, where on earth are my shirts gone to?
W. The moonbeams were silvering the poplar trees.
H. The buttons are off of all of these.
W. A whip-poor-will sang his plaintive tune.
H. I'm hungry 's a bear—it's almost noon.
W. Its clear notes trembled on the air.
H. The baby is climbing on a chair.

W. And listening to the tender call—
H. There goes that young one; I knew he'd fall!
W. A youth and maiden walked hand in hand.
H. Do stop that scribbling, do; good land!
W. He whispered low in her willing ear—
H. The baby's squalling, don't you hear?
W. "Will you be mine?—my own dear love?"
H. Oh, grant me patience, saints above!
W. "Give me that hand, so fair and white."
H. I sha'n't get a mouthful to eat till night!
W. While sang the bird to his listening mate.
H. Come, hurry around, it's getting late.
W. She gave him her hand and sighed, "Ah, me!"
H. It's the blamedest work that ever I see.
W. "If you love me always as well as now—"
H. I'll get a divorce, I will, I vow—
W. "Our lives will be one dream of bliss."
H. I will not have such work as this.
W. And he said, as he clasped her to his heart—
H. If you go on like this we had better part.
W. "I will love you ever, and ever more—"
H. I have talked and talked, till my throat is sore.
W. "And when we go to a brighter land—"
H. I'll put down my foot, and take a stand.
W. "Where sorrow and trouble cometh never—"
H. Stop writing, I say, or I'll leave you forever!
W. "Where angels their glad anthems shout—"

H. I'll have to get dinner, or go without.
W. "Our love will stronger and stronger grow."
H. There's no use talking, I might as well go.

Down to the kitchen the husband descended,
And that is the way the rhymes were ended.

THE FIRESIDE VISION.

A storm is raging without:
The fire is burning low:
And the solemn clock strikes ten:
It is time for bed I know.

But visions of other days
Are flooding my brain to-night,
And pictures glimmer and fade
In the embers' fitful light.

There's a little house of logs,
With its old-time sanded floor,
Where a woman sits and spins,
And nods by the open door.

She wears on her head a cap;
Its border is white as snow.
She turns the wheel with her foot
And spins long threads of tow.

The flames leap up and devour
The log house, woman and all.
All gone; in their place I see
A church-spire, slender and tall.

The church-spire totters and falls,
And disappears like a dream.
In the dull red coals I trace
The course of a winding stream.

And a grist-mill by its side,
All dusty and dim with meal;
I can see the white foam dash
And flash from the whirling wheel.

The miller stands in the door
Till the crackling embers fall,
And the ashes, dark and gray,
Like a shroud envelops all.

The miller and mill are gone,
But two little girls at play
By the flickering flames I see
In the ashes pearly gray.

One maiden has dark brown hair,
The other one, curls like gold—
But lo! they have changed, and now
They are women, bent and old.

Old women in hoods of black
They disappear from my view;
The fire is out, and I know
Those visions were all too true.

APPLE BLOSSOMS.

O beautiful apple tree, fair and bright,
I am lost in wonder and filled with delight,
So lovely you are!
Each graceful bough ladened with clusters of bloom,
And each tiny blossom with sweetest perfume,
That is wafted afar.

Like a beautiful ship with sails wide spread
Alow and aloft, high over my head,
You seem unto me,
With the billowy grass, that waves about,
For ocean waves that are bearing thee out
And away to sea.

Or like to a bride, in garments of white,
Awaiting the groom, with thrills of delight,
A blush on her face,
That is telling her love, in whispers low,
To the bees that search the blossoms of snow
For the honey's hiding-place.

Was anything ever on earth more fair
Than you, O beautiful apple trees, are?
Like a cloud drifting low,
A cloud faintly flushed by day's dying beam—
Like a radiant vision, a tender dream,
Or drift of pure snow.

A teacher art thou, O apple tree fair!
You whisper to us of the tender care
Of our Father above,
Who has clothed each bough with such dainty grace,
And left in each blossom a lingering trace
Of His infinite love.

GIVE THANKS.

Praise the Lord with thankful hearts;
Praise the blessed Giver
Who has cared for us so long,
And will care forever.

Count your blessings o'er to-day,
You will find them many;
Not a soul can truly say
That he has not any.

Life's a blessing; prize it then;
Keep it pure and holy,
Thankful if 'tis honor-crowned;
Thankful if 'tis lowly.

For our Father knows our needs,
Knows that we in blindness,
Often ask for gifts that He
Must withhold in kindness.

High or low, it matters not,
If we are possessing
His dear love, we're rich indeed;
Blessed with richest blessing.

Then return your thanks to-day
To the blessed Giver,
Who has cared for us alway
And will care forever.

CALLING THE COWS.

Sweetest hour of all the day
Is the hour when work is done,
And adown the western sky
Sinks the glowing summer sun;
Then it is, to hunt the cows,
Gladly down the lane I go,
Calling, "Come, Bess! come, Spot, come!
Come, old Brindle! co, Boss, co!"

Tinkling bells beyond the wood
Always tell me where to look
For my drove of waiting cows
Down beside the meadow brook.
Down the shady, rose-lined path,
Dreaming happy dreams, I go,
Light of heart and light of step,
Calling, "Co, Boss! co, Boss, co!"

Other people, too, have cows;
Just across the other side
They are waiting, as mine wait,
Lazy, happy, satisfied.
They are listening, so am I,
To the voice of one we know,
Calling, as he onward comes,
"Co, Boss! co, Boss! co, Boss, co!"

Homeward, then, we start the cows—
Kind old cows to go alone—
While across the little brook
Johnny skips from stone to stone.
Robins sing their evening songs,
By the brook the bluebells grow;
At the barn the chore boy calls,
"Come, Bess! come Brin! co, Boss, co!"

Long we linger, loath to leave
Scenes so pleasant, and beside—
Sad to say—the meadow brook
Does our homeward ways divide.
Johnny says he has a plan—
Very well his plan I know—
That will keep me by his side
When we're calling, "Co, Boss, co!"

It may be—I cannot tell—
In the happy time to come
John and I together may
Drive our gentle cattle home.
So at last we say "Good-night."
"I will come again, you know,"
Johnny says, "to-morrow night,
When I hear your 'Co, Boss, co!'"

Yours Very Truly,
A. L. Morse.

AFTER FIFTY YEARS.

BY REV. A. L. MORSE, M. S.

NOTE.—This poem was written for the fiftieth anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. P. De Mosse, which was celebrated November 4th, 1891, at Drury, Rock Island Co., Ill.

Fifty years! How time has changed us:
Changed the visions of our life:
How the shadows came unbidden
In life's battle and its strife;
But the clouds have always parted,
When our troubled life was sad,
And the sun looked down from heaven
Just in time to make us glad.
Happy bride and prouder bridegroom,
Fifty years ago to-day,
Midst a shower of kindly wishes
Started life's eventful way.
From a host of lads and lasses,
Came a token, look or word,
Bearing thoughts more dear and tender
Than our ears before had heard.
Wishing good, and none of evil;
Wishing sunshine, none of cloud;
Making deeper our devotion
At the altar we had vowed.

Happy children came to greet us,
Stayed to cheer our lonely hours,
Voicing music more enchanting
Than all earth's sweet, blooming flowers.
Hark! the sound of children's voices,
Making music as of old :
"Grandpa, Grandma," they are saying,
"Now the tale is told."
In one face is seen the picture,
Of the Grandsire's when a boy ;
In another's face the laughter
Of the Grandmother's early joy.
Memory makes the heart beat lighter,
In the thoughts of early youth ;
Richer grows the store of knowledge
In our strivings after truth.
Life comes through us unto others,
Stamps our impress on their brow :
Answer cometh to our questions,
God of Nature knoweth how.
Fate is certain ; time is fleeting ;
To their dictates all must bow,
And we ever muse with feeling
Then and now.
Then our path was strewn with flowers,
Cheered by youths and maidens fair
Now the evening twilight gathers,
Leaving marks of weary care.

Then youth glowed in every fiber,
Hope was joyous, future bright:
Now we're bent with age and trembling
From life's conflict and its fight.
Fight of faith, we know its meaning,
Truth has made us brave to dare;
We must be heroic soldiers
If a crown of glory wear.
Faith and truth we both have tested,
Knowing now their value rare;
Faith and truth have never failed us,
Though we oft were bowed with care.
Now, our children, list a moment,
While this counsel we will give:
Work not only for the present,
There's a future life to live.
All your earthly plans will fail you,
When the crisis comes at last;
Earthly years flee like a phantom,
Soon they're buried in the past.
Take this counsel, it will guide you
Through the weary waste of years,
Comforting in time of sorrow,
It will drive away your fears.
Take this faith and live and labor,
In the life that now is given,
There we'll meet no more to sever
In a better home in Heaven.

THE HOMEWARD JOURNEY.

It was at dawn of day
I started on my way;
My heart was light.
The day was fair and warm
And not a sign of storm
Appeared in sight.
The home I sought to gain
Lay far o'er hill and plain;
The way was long.
So to beguile the time
I turned this simple rhyme
Into a song.

Haste along, nor pause to grumble,
Though your lot be e'er so humble
Keep ye in the way.
Loving friends await to meet you,
Helping hands will gladly greet you
At the close of day.

As on my way I passed,
The sky grew overcast;
The hills were steep.

Entangling vines grew thick
I had to search and pick
My way to keep.
The clouds rolled on apace;
The rain fell in my face;
The wind blew cold and strong;
But still I kept my way,
With lightsome heart and gay
I sang my song.

Darkness only serves to render
Lights to shine with greater splendor
When the storm is past.
We will gladly hail the dawning
Of the bright and glorious morning;
Safely home at last.

A sullen stream rushed by;
The sun sank from the sky;
Dark grew the night.
But one bright star looked down
And by its light I found
My path aright.
Though waters rose in wrath
To sweep me from my path:
Yet o'er the wave
One plank I found that proved
Too firm to be removed,
And I was saved.

Dawn of day came softly stealing,
To my longing eyes revealing
Glistening roof and dome,
And I heard the joy bells ringing;
Happy voices sweetly singing:
"Welcome, welcome home."

THE SOLDIER AND HIS VIOLIN.

I own no lands; I have no home,
And neither have I kith nor kin;
One friend alone remains to me,
My old, my battered violin.
Let others scorn me if they will,
And bid me from their doors depart;
Her soothing voice still speaks to me
In tones that cheer my aged heart.

"See-saw, squeak-a-te-squeak,"
I hear the dear old fiddle speak;
She says, as plain as she can say,
"Let's sing, and drive all care away."

She often strikes a merry lay,
With hearty voice I, too, join in;
Then little children shout and say,
"Here comes a man and violin."
I laugh to see them skip about,
Their bright eyes sparkling, full of joy;
It 'minds me of the happy time
When I was just a little boy.

"See-saw, squeak-a-te-squawk,"
They can hear the fiddle talk;
It says to them, as plain as day,
"Be merry, children, while you may."

At other times, my poor old chum
Will play a sad and mournful strain;
Perhaps she's grieving for the boys,
Old comrades, that in war were slain;
At least, that who I'm mourning for.
I often have to drop my bow
To wipe away the tears that fall
For those old friends of long ago.

"See-saw, squeak-a-te-squeak,"
With saddened tone the fiddle speaks,
And plays the tunes we used to know,
And sing together, long ago.

When far from home, we did our best
To cheer the boys, my friend and I,
When in the hospitals they lay,
So sick and sad they longed to die;
How then the wounded brightened up,
And smiles crept over faces thin,
When, through the wards, the soldier lad
Came with his welcome violin.

"See-saw," the fiddle said,
"Don't give up until you're dead:
Lay aside all grief and care;
Never yield to grim despair."

My brothers sleep in Southern soil;
Three bearded, brave and stalwart men;
I only—youngest of the flock—
Survived to reach the North again;
To find I had no more a home;
My mother dead; no kith nor kin;
My only solace since has been
My cheerful friend, my violin.

"See-saw," softly and low,
The strings a-tremble 'neath the bow,
Speaks often to my listening ear
In gentle tones I used to hear.

Sometimes I think that people now
Have got the notion in their head,
The only ones deserving praise
Are just the soldiers that are dead;
If they should praise them all their days
They would not give them half their due;
But what I'm thinking of is this—
Don't those that live need something, too?

"See-saw!"—loud and clear—
Sing a song for the volunteer;
The volunteer who gladly braved
The battle's brunt, the flag to save.

But never mind, it wont be long
That we shall have to skirmish 'round;
We're marching onward, day by day,
To that last peaceful camping-ground
Where officers and comrades wait
Until all stragglers gather in;
They're gathering fast—we'll soon be there,
I and my battered violin.

"See-saw," old violin,
Sound loud those brave old tunes again.
Hurrah for Union evermore!
And for the flag the soldiers bore!

THE WEST WIND.

"Oh, come to the wood!" said the West Wind,
As in through my half-open door
He came, with his offering of fragrance,
He'd gathered from woodland and moor.

Then gladly I left work and worry,
And followed the rover so gay,
As off through the orchard and meadow,
He danced in his merry, mad way.

The humming of bees in the blossoms;
The songs of the birds in the trees;
The tinkle of bells in the distance
Came borne to my ear on the breeze.

The violets were blue on the hill-side;
The buttercups yellow as gold;
The popples were green in the hollows;
The oak leaves began to unfold.

Yet ever a spirit of sadness
Remained like a ghost by my side
And whispered to me of the sister,
Who once in her joy and her pride,

Roamed over the woodland and meadows,
And sang with the birds in her glee.
But now, Oh, I miss her, I miss her;
For she comes nevermore here with me.

I listen in vain for her laughter;
I call her; she does not reply;
The wind in the pines murmurs softly
And breathes for my darling a sigh.

Oh, gay, happy world, in your gladness,
Smile on in your beauty and bloom;
You heed not the tears that are falling
For dear ones that sleep in the tomb.

Oh, West Wind, gay West Wind, come hither
And whisper a dirge, sad and low,
For her who went over the river,
And left me alone, years ago.

THE LITTLE STEP "MUVER."

They sat at the board; a bright, merry crew;
Laughing and chatting as children will do,
When just from the school-room close they come
To gather around the table at home.
Now calling for that; now calling for this;
Pausing to pay, with a hug and a kiss.
Little June Rose, the baby and pet,
Who, with sweet mouth smiling and eyes like jet,
Was flying around and doing her best,
In her motherly way, to wait on the rest.
"How she steps around," said her sister Dot;
"She's the cutest girl that mama's got.
See how she's flying around the house—
Spry as a kitten, and still as a mouse."
"She's just like a mother," said brother Dick;
"She waits on us all so handy and quick."
And little Daisy remarked, with a smile,
"How she keeps stepping around all the while;
If she don't stop, pretty soon, to eat,
She will just tire out her two little feet."
And dear baby June, much pleased with the praise
Of her sprightly steps and motherly ways,
Demurely asked, as she took them a drink,
"Then aint I a 'step-muver,' don't you fink?"

THE BRIGHT SIDE OF THINGS.

"Good morning, friend Robin,"
Twittered old Madam Jay.
"I was feeling so blue
On this dismal day
That I left my dull nest,
To call over and see
Why you sang all the day
In this old maple tree.

"Good morning, Mrs. Jay"—
Gaily nodding her head—
"Most happy to see you,"
Chirruped dear Robin Red.
"Take a seat by my side
On this nice swinging limb.
I'd be very much pleased
If you'd join in my hymn."

"Oh, don't ask me, I pray;
I'm as hoarse as a crow:
Took a very bad cold—
This wet weather you know;
And I've had so much care
On my mind all the spring
I've almost forgotten,
I'm afraid, how to sing.

"I feel more like squalling
When the weather is bad:
I cannot imagine
What makes you so glad.
If you have a recipe
For your happiness, dear,
Will you give it to me
That my life it may cheer?"

"I'll try," said dear Robin,
"To tell you the reason
That I sing just the same
From season to season;
Whatever the weather
I am happy, you see,
For I love the dear nest
In this old maple tree.

"I sing when 'tis pleasant,
For my heart is so light
That I have to keep singing
From morning till night.
I sing when 'tis cloudy
To cheer up my neighbors;
And I sing while I work
To lighten my labors.

"It is love, Mrs. Jay,
In each dear feathered breast
That makes life so happy
In the little home nest;
'Tis pleasant to labor
For dear ones we love,
As I often remark
To my friend, Mrs. Dove."

"Well, now, my dear Robin,
That all sounds very fine,"
Chattered old Madam Jay;
"But I rather opine
It would be up-hill work
For us Jays, though mayhap
I will try it," she said,
As she nodded her cap.

Then stroking her feathers
With her smooth iv'ry bill
Robin fluttered away
In the best of good will.
Then upward she mounted
To the top of the trees,
And there merrily sang
As she swung in the breeze.

IN MOTHER'S ROOM.

Dear mother, I sit to-night in your room,
And softly I call, but you do not come,
And my eyes with tears run o'er;
My heart cries out in its bitter grief,
"Oh mother, come back; I cannot believe
That you'll come to me no more."

You went long ago, though it seems but a day
Since I watched by your bedside day by day,
And I knew you would soon be gone;
Again, when I think of the tears I've shed;
The weary hours I have wept for my dead,
Then the time since you went seems long.

I sometimes think that you long for me there,
Though I know there is never sorrow or care
On that beautiful, peaceful shore;
But a mother her child can ne'er forget,
The child she loved here, she is loving yet,
And will love forevermore.

I tremble no more at the thought of death,
But often in ecstacy hold my breath
When I think of the joy to come;
For I know you will list for my coming feet
And will hasten to be the first to meet
And to welcome your daughter home.

Oh Father in Heaven, help me, I pray,
To walk in the straight and narrow way
That leads to the ones I love:
In Thy holy name will I ever trust,
Although my idols lay low in the dust,
I shall see them again above.

MOTHER'S SUNBEAMS.

I know of four dear sunbeams
That always shine for me;
I'm sure they are as lovely
As one could wish to see.

And two are softly shining
From tender, dark-brown eyes;
Two others laugh and sparkle
From eyes like summer skies.

Then what care I how dreary
The day without may be
If in my home those love lights
Beam evermore for me?

Then let no cloud of anger
Obscure their happy light;
Nor sullen fogs descending
E'er hide them from my sight.

But in your hearts keep ever
The love that makes them glow,
Then smiles will always greet you,
No matter where you go.

Bright eyes and smiling faces,
And loving hearts and true,
Can make of home an Eden,
My dear Brown eyes, and Blue.

MY KNIGHT.

NOTE.—A description of a tree covered with ice, in the bright, dazzling morning sunlight.

I saw a knight
In armor bright
One winter's morn, beside my gate;
No word he said
Nor bowed his head;
He stood unmoved, and stern as fate.

Though kings of old
Wore crowns of gold,
And sported many a flashing gem;
No precious stone
More brightly shone
Than did this brave knight's diadem.

So tall and slim,
So very grim,
That one might think no heart he had;
Yet I have seen
In springtime green
This grim knight looking gay and glad.

For when aside
He lays his pride,
And drops his armor on the ground,
His limbs all free,
He'll bow to me,
Then none more graceful can be found.

I love him, too;
Indeed, I do;
I've told him so, my knight so dear;
Yet, strange to say,
I feel most gay
When he is leaving every year.

STEALING A BRIDE.

I.

'Twas far away and long ago—
How far or long I do not know—
That by a pleasant, shady wood
A brown, old-fashioned farm-house stood.
The trees spread high their rugged arms,
To shelter it from Northern storms;
On south and west grew fields of grain,
And eastward ran the grassy lane,
Where buttercups, like gleaming stars,
Grew thick beside the pasture bars.
The house—a low, one-story frame,
You've seen a thousand just the same—
Was half concealed by grapevines tall,
That clung and clambered up the wall.
And morning glories, here and there,
Ran nimbly up the grapevine stair,
And high o'erhead its bluebells swung—
Sweet, voiceless bells without a tongue,
Yet sending by each wandering breeze
An invitation to the bees
To come and dine on nectar rare,
Served up in cups of dainty ware.

Within the garden small there grew
Sweet old-time flowers our mothers knew:
Long rows of pinks, and little plots
Of larkspurs and forget-me-nots,
And marigolds and candytuf,
And ragged sailors, fringed and rough;
While poppies nodded sleepy heads
Over the purple pansy beds;
And up and down the garden walks,
Like sentinels stood the hollyhocks.

II.

The farmer sat beside his door,
And, smiling, viewed the landscape o'er.
His kind eyes shone with love and pride,
As up the pathway he espied
His daughter Nettie, fair and sweet,
Who, smiling, came with tripping feet;
Her cheeks aglow with exercise,
And laughter sparkling in her eyes;
Her tangled curls, with careless grace,
Pushed backward from her dimpled face;
Her bonnet swinging in her hand,
An invite to the sun to tan
The winsome face that wore no frown,
Although the sunshine kissed it brown.
"Come hither, Gipsy, let us talk,"

The father said, "about your walk.
What does your gingham apron hold?
Pray tell; its mysteries unfold;
And tell me where my pet has been,
And what the wonders she has seen."
With lightsome heart the maid complied,
And gladly sought her father's side;
Then golden head and gray were bent,
As with a look of deep intent
They scanned her apron's precious store,
And turned the gathered treasures o'er.
A bunch of ferns, from Shadow Glen,
And pine-cones from the Witches' Den;
Soft velvet moss, with ruby cups,
From which the woodland fairy sups.
And gleaming shells, with pearly walls;
But empty were the winding halls—
The builders all had fled away,
And left their castles to decay—
Or so, at least, the maiden said,
And wisely shook her curly head.
'Twas thus the happy couple sat
And passed the time in pleasant chat.
"My dear," the father said, "don't stray,
When out alone, too far away;
There's been some thieving done in town,
And strangers have been hanging 'round;
A thievish, shiftless looking crew,

Who seem to have no work to do,
But lounge about the town all day,
And nights to slip unseen away.
That fellow, who I've seen of late,
So often halting by the gate
To catch a glimpse of you, my dear,
Had better keep away from here.
You need not blush so rosy red,
I do not speak of Will nor Fred;
For very well your father knows
You pretty girls must have your beaux.
Those honest boys I've known for years,
Of them I have not any fears;
But of this stranger, Net, beware.
This man with jet black eyes and hair
Has to my eyes an evil look,
Like villains in a story book.
So, when alone, stay on the farm
For fear someone might do you harm."

III.

Aunt Cinthy we have left too long:
But now make haste to right the wrong,
And introduce upon the stage
A maiden of uncertain age,
Who, clinging fondly to her youth,
Repeated oft this patent truth,

When questions as to age grew bold,
"I'm not so young, nor yet so old."
And with this phrase she deftly turned
Aside all questions. People learned
Nothing at all to satisfy
Their anxious minds by this reply.
But as the years went rolling by,
Old Father Time, with touches sly,
Marked off the years on brow and cheek,
And told the tale she would not speak.
Though paint and powder, used with care,
With Ayer's Vigor for her hair,
Served much those tell-tale marks to hide
And filled her hopeful heart with pride.
For, gentle reader, you must know,
Her greatest wish was for a beau:
A lover true, who might be led
To choose her for his mate and wed.
Although defeated o'er and o'er,
She persevered and tried once more
To win unto herself a mate,
And be a wife in spite of fate.
Praiseworthy zeal! sure none could blame
An ancient maiden for the same.
But when she undertook the cares
Of other people's love affairs,
And sought to know more than she ought,
She often into trouble brought

The victims of her espionage,
Who called her—when they were enraged—
A silly, prying, sly old maid,
Of whom all lovers were afraid.

IV.

Now, kind Aunt Cinthy, full of care,
In anger listens to the pair;
The merry girl and gray-haired sire,
With laugh and jest, aroused her ire.
"Such silly talk," she said with scorn,
"I never heard since I was born.
I really don't know what they mean;
That child is hardly seventeen,
And yet he talked of beaux to her.
Men would an older wife prefer,
If they were wise; someone that knew
Enough to wash and bake and brew.
Now, I am not so young as she,
Nor yet so old as some. Dear me!
My plans will never work just right.
This world is full of trouble, quite.
Now, I must watch that silly child;
I'm fearful she is running wild;
If beaux she has, that fact I'll know,
And when they come, and where they go;
I'm sure I could not rest in peace

If I neglected my young niece;
I'll set myself to finding out
What all this nonsense is about;
I'd tell them, if I thought it best,
To let their troubles be at rest,
About that man with eyes of jet;
I know he does not care for Net.
Of course he bowed to her, and smiled,
But kept his eyes on me the while.
And oh, his eyes, so keen and bright,
They thrilled my heart with wild delight.
Some knight is he, or else a prince,
His looks, his way to me evince;
And when I saw him at the gate,
I knew that I had met my fate.
They need not think he comes to see
A silly child; he loves but me.
They think because I'm old—I mean,
Because I'm not so young and green
As Nettie is, I have no chance.
They do not dream he'd cast a glance
At such as me—but never mind,
He is my lover they will find—
But yet, I think I'll keep my eye
Upon them both—folks are so sly."

V.

Now, we must leave this pleasant place,
Whilst other characters we trace,

And follow to the hills and caves
This man of whom Aunt Cinthy raves.
He, with a half a score of men,
Were gathered in a rocky den.
A thievish lot, who labor spurned
And stole what honest people earned.
For weeks this cave had been their home,
From here, to ply their trade, they'd roam.
Their chief—this self-same man, of course—
Had just dismounted from his horse,
And like a king, born to command,
He gently waved his jeweled hand,
When instantly each man was still,
Waiting to hear their master's will.
"My friends," he said, "old, tried and true,
I have some work for you to do
With danger fraught, but, for my sake,
I know the task you'll undertake.
A wandering life for years I've led
Yet found no maid I wished to wed
Till now. My men, at last I've seen
A lady fit to be your queen.
Her many charms can ne'er be told;
Her perfect form, her curls of gold,
And laughing eyes, and dimpled cheek,
Of these, my friends, 'tis vain to speak.
But this fair girl is proud and shy;

There is no use for me to try
With honeyed words to woo and win—
I sure would fail, did I begin.
To courtship's joys I'll waive my right
And take my lady love by might."
The men, at this, the silence broke,
And cheered so loud that they awoke
The woodland birds from peaceful sleep;
From every side the chirrup and peep
Of frightened birds aroused from dreams
Was heard, and loud the nighthawks' screams
Resounded through the forest dim.
An owl, above them on a limb,
His great wings flapped to swell the noise,
And cried, "Too hoo," with doleful voice.
When silent grew the noisy gang
The chief resumed his grand harangue;
And thanked them for their hearty cheers,
Then called on them for volunteers.
"Let no one come who is afraid,
For this may be a dangerous raid.
Who comes with me must be as I,
Prepared to win the prize, or die,"
He said, and once more waved his hand,
When forward stepped the entire band.
He smiled to see the eager crew,
And which to choose, he hardly knew.

But, as the night is growing late,
We'll leave them to deliberate
And plan the mode of their attack,
The while we swiftly hurry back,
And, being swiftest in the race,
Before them reach the farmer's place.

VI.

The peaceful home seems all secure.
The glimmering moonlight, pale and pure,
Crept through the leaves' entangled woof,
And lay in patches on the roof.
Deep quiet reigns about the farm;
They sleep, nor dream of coming harm.
Yet where the shadows darkest fall,
Three men are creeping by the wall.
Their horses, tethered in the swamp,
Where none could hear them neigh or stamp,
Impatient wait and long to hear
Their masters' footsteps coming near.
"Hark!" said the chief, "keep still and wait
And watch that pathway to the gate;
For sentimental girls, at times,
Will take to moonlight and to rhymes
As natural as they do to love.
Look! there's a glimmering light above;
My birdie seeks her peaceful nest—
Soon all the house will be at rest.

She cares not for a walk, it seems,
But seeks, instead, the land of dreams.
It matters not, fair lady mine,
For like a ladder swings the vine.
'Tis strong enough, methinks, to hold
The footstep of a lover bold.
If she but rooms alone, 'twill be
For us an easy victory;
But if with her the aunt is found,
Then there'll be trouble, I'll be bound.
Now creep along. This leafy screen
Will keep our forms from being seen;
If prying eyes this way should peer
They could not see us hidden here."

VII.

Oh, hollyhocks, were you asleep,
That thus you let the outlaws creep,
Unchallenged, up the garden walk,
All heedless of their lawless talk?
Go, hang your heads, and blush with shame
That through your ranks, unheard, they came.
Oh, trumpet-flower, with crimson throat,
Why gave you out no warning note?
Sweet flowers, your mistress loves so well,
Why silent hangs each dew-wet bell
When evil men around thee glide,

And in thy shadows safely hide?
Through fleecy clouds the crescent moon
Slips slowly toward the horizon
Far in the deep blue sky, afloat,
Dips downward like a sinking boat.
It disappears, and over all
Night lets her robes of darkness fall.
The fire-fly lit his fitful lamp,
And through the foliage, cool and damp,
Flashed here and there his tiny light
To cheer the dreary hours of night.
The cricket chirruped, loud and shrill,
An answer to the whip-poor-will;
The night wind breathed a warning sigh,
Swept through the trees and hurried by.
The household sleeps, nor dreams of fear,
Unconscious of the danger near.

VIII.

Like wolves that gather round the fold,
Still nearer drew the robbers bold.
The captain's heart exultant leaps,
As from his hiding place he creeps;
He sees a female form appear
Beside the lilac bushes near.
"'Tis she," he said in whisper low.
"That graceful form I surely know.

None but a love-sick girl would dare
The dangers of this damp night air.
She comes to keep a tryst, no doubt,
With some young beau, a country lout,
Who may be lurking somewhere by,
So do not give her time to cry."
They could not see—so dark the night—
Her face, but by her garments white,
That had her presence there betrayed,
They traced the movements of the maid,
Who came with halting steps and slow,
As if uncertain where to go;
Then paused, in listening attitude,
Close where the hidden ruffians stood.
Swift to her side the robber sprung,
And round her face his scarf he flung.
And, stifled thus, her frightened cries
Upon the night air faintly dies.
In vain she struggles. Grasping tight
Her slender form—to him so light—
With ruthless steps, through beds of bloom,
In haste he bears her from her home.
"Come, men, away from here make haste,"
He whispers; "there's no time to waste;
When people learn what we have done
They'll storm and rave. Ha! ha! what fun!
Once hidden in our secret cave
We'll let the baffled searchers rave."

IX.

Through wild, rough ways, that darksome night,
The men kept onward in their flight,
With only now and then a stop
To rest them on some high hill's top
A moment's space. Such times the chief,
To win the lady from her grief,
Would whisper words of hope and cheer,
In hopes to soothe the captive's fear.
He longed to see the blushing face
Of her he held in his embrace;
But darkness reigned; no starlight ray
Illumed the wildwood's tangled way.
So still she lay upon his breast
He dared at length a kiss to press
Upon her brow; a gentle sigh,
At this bold act, was her reply.
He marveled much—this shy, sweet maid
Of him seemed not at all afraid.
A quick idea through him thrilled,
His heart with rapturous joy was filled.
"Perhaps this midnight escapade
Had charmed this young, romantic maid;
Mayhap this warlike way will prove
The surest way to win her love.
For timid girls—so I've been told—
Admire and love the brave and bold.

Ah, Cupid, what an elf thou art;
She, too, has felt thy magic dart."
'Twas thus he mused, this valiant knight,
While beat his heart with wild delight.
Until the rendezvous they gained
And by their cavern home drew reign.
And then with deferential air,
He gently led his lady fair
The rough and rocky pathway o'er
And safely through the vine-draped door.
He paused within a deep recess
To let his followers by him pass,
That they the sleeping crew might call,
And gather them within the hall,
To light the fires, and then await
To greet his bride in royal state.
"For thou my little bride shall be;
A willing one, I trust," said he.
"I'm yours," she whispered, "yours alone:
No other king my heart could own."
"Ah! can it be? What joy! what bliss!
I dared not dream of love like this.
The fates, indeed, have been most kind,"
He said; "and you will ever find
In me a lover fond and true,
Whose heart will own no queen but you.
Now one more kiss, my love, and then
We'll go and join my trusty men,

Who wait within yon lighted room
Their chieftain's bride to welcome home."
The kiss was given with so much zeal
It nearly made his senses reel,
As on he led, still in a maze,
The lady where the flickering blaze
From numerous lamps around the wall
Upon the group, their rays let fall.
Then with the air of conquerer bold,
He cried: "My men, look and behold
Your future queen, my lovely bride."
And bending with a look of pride
Removed the scarf with courtly grace,
That still in part concealed her face.
"We welcome you," he said, then stopped;
Her clinging hand he quickly dropped;
His eyes seemed starting from his head;
He gazed, like one whose wits had fled,
Upon the maid, whose face the while
Was wreathed in one perpetual smile.
The men had doffed their hats and rose
To greet the bride their chieftain chose;
A word of welcome on each tongue,
To put in graceful speech, or sung,
Perchance, in some impressive rhyme
Composed to suit the place and time.
Now, like their chief, they stood and stared;
They could not speak—to laugh none dared.

Between amusement and amaze
They silent stood and mutely gazed
At—Who? Not Nettie, young and fair—
'Twas poor Aunt Cinthy standing there
To meet the gaze of wondering eyes
That stared at her in wild surprise.
All undismayed she stood her ground
And calmly bowed to all around;
Unconscious she of any joke,
Said, "Good day, friends;" and thus she broke
The silence that had held in thrall
The motley crew within the hall,
Then loud and long their shouts arose,
Regardless, quite, of friends or foes,
Of captain's frowns or Cinthy's fears,
They filled the echoing cave with cheers.
And still Aunt Cinthy smiled and bowed;
The captain swore, and threathened loud;
But all in vain. Each word he spoke
But served their laughter to provoke.
They fairly yelled in frantic glee
Aunt Cinthy's beaming face to see;
And yet she thought—the poor old maid—
These cheers were but the homage paid
To her, the captain's chosen wife;
And never in her luckless life
Had she so proud a moment known,
And, like a queen upon her throne,

She smiled and bowed from left to right,
While howled the gang in wild delight.
But words are powerless to express
The captain's frantic wrath, much less
Aunt Cinthy's deep disgust and rage,
Which bribes of gold failed to assuage
When told at last, the sad mistake
She said she "knew her heart would break."
But, as nobody seemed to care,
She changed her tactics then and there,
And called down vengeance on the head
Of him who promised her to wed.
The captain blamed himself and fate
For blunders, but it was too late;
The mischief could not be undone,
Their only plan was now—to run.
A trusty messenger, ere morn,
Returned Aunt Cinthy, all forlorn,
To home and friends; where she remained
In peace and safety, and refrained
From interfering, so I'm told,
In love affairs. Though not so old,
Nor yet so young as some, she stayed
Forevermore a lone old maid.

A SKATING SONG.

O'er the trees the moon is peeping,
Where the frozen stream,
Like a sheet of molten silver
Flashes back her beams.
All the trees wear gala dresses;
Robes of spotless snow
Wrap the earth in royal splendor;
Frost-stars gleam and glow.

Chorus.

Hip, hurrah! this is pleasant;
This, indeed, is nice;
With your sweetheart in the moonlight
Skating on the ice.

Here we merry skaters gather;
Ring our skates of steel,
As away we dart and circle
Till our senses reel.
Boys are shouting, girls are laughing,
Eager for a race;
Bright eyes sparkle as we're dashing
In the headlong chase.

Ch.—Hip, hurrah, etc.—

What care we for bumps and tumbles,
All is sport to-night—
There goes Nell, her tresses flying—
Daring little sprite.
Back she turns to fling a challenge:
"Follow if you dare!"
Sweetly rings her girlish laughter
On the wintry air.
Ch.—Hip, hurrah, etc.

Up the shining, winding river,
Where the ice-floor white
Shineth like a path of silver,
We pursue our flight.
Onward still we skim like swallows,
Till a gloomy shade
Falls across our path; then Nellie
Says she is "afraid."
Ch.—Hip, hurrah, etc.

Clasps my arm, and—well, no matter
If I hold her tight;
If I kiss her no one sees me,
We are out of sight.
Slowly then, adown the river,
Back skate I and Nell.
What she promised, while returning,
I will never tell.
Ch.—Hip, hurrah, etc.

THE RED MAN'S LAMENT.

He came in the twilight dim,
A vision gaunt and grim,
As I sat by the river's shore;
His long, black, braided hair
Fell over his shoulders bare
And the blanket that he wore.

His voice was sad and low
As the murmuring waves that flow,
Or the wind in the sighing pine.
"I have come from the spirit land,"
He said as he waved his hand,
"To visit these lands of mine.

"But where are my hunting grounds?
All over the wooded mounds
The white man's dwellings stand;
In the place where our wigwams stood
In the green and quiet wood,
All over this once fair land.

"The rush and the roar of the steam,
The great mills' screech and scream,
Speak to my ears of the doom
That has stricken my kindred and race,
And driven them from the place
For rest in the peaceful tomb.

"There is nothing that can withstand
The might of the white man's hand
Wherever he holds his sway.
The rocks, so grand in their height,
They chisel and blast and smite,
And bear in fragments away.

"Unchanged yet the river remains,
Its waves they cannot restrain;
Forever and ever they glide
By the rocks and the grassy shore
Where we hunted and fished of yore,
And bathed in its cooling tide.

"The voice of its waves is sweet;
It was here that I used to meet
With my beautiful, dark-eyed maid.
Then away in our light canoe,
Like the swallows, we skimmed and flew
Where the moonbeams danced and played.

"Now gone are the chiefs and the braves
That dwelt by these shining waves,
A mighty and powerful race.
Even their graves are lost;
Their dust to the wild winds tossed:
The white man rules in their place.

"Oh! why did I ever return?
And why did my spirit yearn
To visit these haunts of old?
I will hie me away whence I came,
And hide, in my sorrow and shame,
My face in my blanket's fold."

He wrapped his blanket of gray
About him, and faded away,
And disappeared from my view
As the moon rose over the trees,
And a whiff of the evening breeze
Away the river-mist blew.

THE TRAMP.

"Say, comrade, stop a moment, do,
And tell me where we are.
What town is that whose steeples gleam
Across the fields afar?
You say you've 'lost your reckoning' quite,
And hain't the least 'idee.'
Well, Bill, I'm very much afraid
It's just the same with me.

"We're like two old dismantled ships
Adrift upon the tide;
No anchor, chart, nor compass left,
Reckless the waves we ride:
No beacon light invites the tramp;
No harbor safe and warm.
Beneath the tattered pirate flag
We brave the raging storm.

"I feel to-night as though this wreck
Was drifting into port.
No, Bill, I don't intend to 'preach;'
I know it's not my forte:

But all the world seems changed to me,
As by some fairy's wand.
I think my weary feet at last
Have reached enchanted land.

"There's something 'bout this quiet place
That warms my hard heart through;
A memory dim, so sweet 'tis sad;
So old 'tis strange and new.
Yes, Bill, my heart, I thought 'twas dead;
But now, I must confess,
I feel it beating quick and warm
Beneath my ragged vest.

"The long, dark line of sin-stained years
That's turned my hair so gray,
Like storm-clouds from the evening sky,
Seems rolling swift away.
Once more I am a little boy,
With satchel, slate and book
Thrown on the ground the while I fish
For minnows in the brook.

"Hark! hear the wind sigh through the pines;
It whispers soft and low,
And calls me by the same old name
I knew so long ago;

The name my mother used to call
When in the evening's gloom
She stood within her cottage door
And called her children home.

"Somewhere I've seen a place like this;
Perhaps 'twas in a dream;
The road curved round the hill just so,
Before it crossed the stream.
And just beyond the bridge, I know
A little cottage stood—
Stop, Bill—don't stir—look there and see
That old house by the wood!

"It is the same—my childhood's home.
Give me your arm, my friend;
I feel so strange, I really think
I'm near my journey's end.
Home, home at last, but well I know
I have returned too late.
No friends are left; the old house stands
Alone and desolate."

* * * * * *

Beside the road, where once he played,
The tramp sank down to rest;
A smile upon his bearded lip,
His hands crossed o'er his breast.

"And now I lay me down," he sighed;
His trembling voice grew still.
The tramp was dead, with none to mourn
But poor old comrade Bill.

GRANNY CROAKER.

When you are sick and long for cheer,
Who is it that you most do fear?
'Tis she who then is always near—
Sad Granny Croaker.

She takes a seat beside your bed,
Her clammy hands upon your head,
And says, "You look like one that's dead."
Bright Granny Croaker!

She'll tell of people she has known
With symptoms 'zactly like your own;
But now, "Alas! they're dead and gone,"
Groans Granny Croaker.

When you are up, around once more,
Who comes to cheer you as before,
And sharply raps upon the door,
But Granny Croaker?

She says, "Good-morning," with a grin.
You sigh to see her visage thin:
You know that trouble will walk in
With Granny Croaker.

With pleasant chat you try your best
To entertain your doleful guest,
But cheerful subjects have no zest
For Granny Croaker.

You kindly speak a word in praise
Of the new preacher and his ways.
"I hope they'll not his salary raise,"
Snarls Granny Croaker.

"There's no use making such a fuss:
He's not at all miraculous,
Although he's good enough for us,"
Sighs Granny Croaker.

You speak about the wedding gay
Of Clarence Stokes and Minnie Day.
"Why, hain't you heard what people say?"
Asks Granny Croaker.

"You have not heard! Well, I declare!
How very ignorant you are.
He's got another wife somewhere,"
Smiles Granny Croaker.

"You don't believe it? Very well.
Just mark my words and wait a spell.
The story's true, as time will tell,"
Snaps Granny Croaker.

She asks you if you have not heard
"That awful story of Miss Bird.
She'll tell, if you won't lisp a word."
Wise Granny Croaker!

One-half she says you don't believe,
Yet in your heart you do not grieve
When Granny Croaker takes her leave,
Still sadly croaking.

BIRDIE GRAY.

Waft perfume, O wildwood flowers,
Out from all your dewy bowers
On the morning air,
For along the pathway shady
Comes a dainty little lady;
Gleams like gold her hair.

Going to school, this little maiden,
With her books and basket laden,
Stops in much surprise,
For a little boy is lying
By the roadside, sobbing, crying;
Tears flowed from his eyes.

Dies on Birdie's lips the ditty.
Childhood's heart, so full of pity,
Does not hesitate;
But, in tones of sweet compassion,
She proceeds in childish fashion
To investigate.

"What doth ail you, little boy?
All the world is full of joy:
See the bright blue sky,
Hear the squirrels' merry chatter;
Tell me, please, what is the matter—
Wherefore do you cry?

"Little lady, I am weary;
All the world to me looks dreary—
Not a friend have I.
I am left here broken-hearted;
All who loved me have departed
To their homes on high.

"Food and clothes I need so badly.
I would labor for them gladly,
If they'd let me try.
But no one will now befriend me;
No one cares to recommend me,
So forlorn am I.

"Do you wonder, pretty fairy,
That I, hungry, weak and weary,
Sought in tears relief?
Wondering if from Heaven my mother,
And my little blue-eyed brother,
Witnessed all my grief."

Tears in Birdie's bright eyes glistened,
Slowly falling—while she listened—
On his sunburned hand.
And she whispered, "Don't you sorrow;
Better luck you'll find to-morrow
Somewhere in the land.

"Do not let your courage fail you;
When misfortune doth assail you
Patient be and good.
Pray to Jesus; He'll befriend you,
And He will a blessing send you,
For He said He would.

"Play, now, I'm a fortune-teller"—
Laying down her slate and speller,
His brown hand to hold.
"I can see a future splendid;
Sorrow gone and trouble ended—
Honor, fame and gold.

"You will make a happy marriage,
Ride in triumph in your carriage.
Then to you will bow
Those who, in their pride, disdaining
E'en to list your sad complaining,
Heedless pass you now.

"Take this basket—don't refuse it—
And this book, too; please peruse it
When you're far away.
It, perhaps, may oft remind you
Of the friend you've left behind you,
Little Birdie Gray."

* * * * *

Years have passed. The boy whose sobbing
Startled once the maid and robin
Many years ago,
In that mansion grand and stately
Dwelleth now, respected greatly,
Loved by high and low.

See him, 'neath the lime trees shady,
Talking to that lovely lady
Walking by his side.
"Sweet," he says, his dark eyes glowing,
"All I am to you I'm owing."
Birdie is his bride.

THE OLD FERRYMAN.

As Uncle Sam, the ferryman,
One pleasant summer day,
Upon his boat lay dreaming
The afternoon away,
He saw a carriage coming,
Drawn by a foaming steed.
Said Sam, "They're in a hurry,
To judge them by their speed."

A dark-faced man was driving,
And by his side there sat
A woman with her features
Half concealed by veil and hat.
The man, who was a stranger,
Had a fierce, determined look.
Said Sam, "That man's a villain ;
I could swear it on the Book."

"Ho, ferryman! make ready,
Nor loiter there and dream,"
Called the man in angry accents,
As he halted near the stream.

Old Sam complied in silence,
But his sharp eyes closely scanned
The couple as he slowly
Pushed the ferry-boat from land.

"That's the doctor's gal," he muttered,
"That lives down here below;
But the fellow that is with her
Is a chap that I don't know.
And I guess that he needs watching.
I don't like his look nor tone,
So I'll keep my eyes upon him—
I've a darter of me own."

As he poled his boat in silence
He shook his grizzled head,
And his keen ears caught each whisper,
Each low word that they said.
The man was quite determined
That the maid with him should go,
But the woman was unwilling
To leave her parents so.

"Oh, take me back," she pleaded,
"We have gone quite far enough;"
But he refused, and answered,
In words both coarse and rough,

"You cannot go, my lady;
I love you all too well.
We will flee away together,
In some distant land to dwell."

Sam worked away in silence
Till they nearly reached the land,
When he turned and asked the stranger
To lend a helping hand.
And, nothing loth, the fellow,
So anxious to elope,
Stepped out upon the ferry-boat
And seized a coil of rope.

"I'm much obleeged," said Sammy,
As he gave a sudden push
That sent the old boat forward
Through the water with a rush.
It struck the bank, capsizing
The stylish-looking chap.
"Now," chuckled Sam, "it's curious
About that man's mishap?

"But now, my little lady,
If you've had enough of him,
Suppose we leave him here awhile
To have his little swim."

"O, yes," she cried in terror;
"I care for him no more.
Please turn your boat, and take me
Unto the other shore."

Said Sam, "I kinder reckon
The way is long and lone
For a gal like you to travel—
I've a darter of me own—
So say no more about it.
I'll let the boat drift down,
And take you to your father,
Where I'll land you safe and sound."

They floated down the river
Till the sun was nearly down,
And they saw the sunbeams glisten
On the steeples of the town.
"Are you tired?" asked the maiden,
As Sam slowly poled the craft.
"Not at all," said cheerful Sammy,
As he looked around and laughed.

"But, to save a deal of gossip,
I am slowing up the ark
So's to reach the steamboat landing
Just a little arter dark."

"That is just what I was wishing,"
Said the girl in thankful tone.
"Yes," said Sam, "I kinder thought so—
I've a darter of me own."

At last they reached the landing
As the twilight shadows fell,
And again the lady thanked him
As she bade old Sam farewell.
"My father will reward you,
If you'll here a moment stay;
For the kindness you have shown me
Mere thanks can ne'er repay."

But not a cent of money
Would the ferryman receive;
But slowly o'er his misty eyes
He drew his ragged sleeve,
And answered their entreaties
In a rather husky tone:
"I've done nothing but my duty—
I've a darter of me own."

HER EVENING PRAYER.

"Now I lay me down to sleep,"
Prays my darling, kneeling near.
Swift my wandering thoughts return,
As her baby voice I hear.

"I pray the Lord my soul to keep,"
Lisps the gentle voice again,
While I echo baby's prayer,
"Even so, O Lord, amen!"

"If I should die before I wake,"
Still repeats she, soft and low;
But the chill that strikes my heart
At these words she cannot know.

"I pray the Lord my soul to take,"
Speaking slow, with upturned eyes
Towards the twinkling stars that gleam
In the far-off evening skies.

"This I ask for Jesus' sake."
"Yes," I say, and, lowly bow,
"For the blessed Savior's sake,
Keep her always pure as now."

INDIAN CORN.

Of all the crops that bless the land,
And farmers' fields adorn,
There's none I love so well to see
As golden Indian corn,
From when it shows its tender leaves
Until it stands bound up in sheaves.

On summer eves I love to walk
The fields of corn among,
And fancy that each rustling leaf
Is gifted with a tongue;
For whispers low from every stalk
I hear, that sound like Indian talk.

And cautious feet, with stealthy tread,
Seem ever drawing near.
I look. And lo! in blankets green
The braves to me appear.
I see them, in the twilight dim,
A band of warriors, dark and grim.

I see the chieftain's nodding plumes
In tassels of the corn;
The silks are scalp-locks, too, that serve
His garments to adorn.
How straight and tall, how still they stand,
Like ghostly sentinels of the land.

I look to see the curling smoke
From council fires arise,
Where not a whiff this many a day
Has drifted toward the skies.
They smoke the pipe of peace no more
In quiet by their wigwam door.

"Say, spirits of a vanished race,
What is it that ye seek?
What would you have? Be not afraid—
A little louder speak."
Hark! heard I not an ancient chief
Sigh, "Ah, our lands have come to grief.

"Unquiet ghosts of Indian braves,
We often gather here
To view again the hunting grounds
That once to us were dear,
And talk of times long, long ago,
When here we chased the fawn and doe."

A distant rumble, then a shriek,
The engine's voice is heard;
The vision fades—in haste my braves,
Without a parting word,
Flee from the land where they were born—
I walk alone the field of corn.

OVER LIFE'S SEA.

With sails unfurled, at break of day
My ship put out to sea.
The morn was bright, my heart was light;
The breeze blew fresh and free.

My pilot, Will, brave, strong and bold,
Stood by the wheel to guide
My good ship safely by the rocks
Out to the ocean wide.

My old friend, Heart, went out as mate;
Love had a passage free;
Joy shipped aboard as cabin boy—
A merry lad was he.

Hope went aloft to keep a watch
For Happy Islands, where
Mortals could live fore'er in peace—
No trouble, grief or care.

"Sail on, sail on!" Hope called to me,
"I pray you have no fears—
No rocks in sight, the sea is calm,
And not a cloud appears.

"Land ho!" he cried. "The headlands gleam,
All bathed in sunbeams bright;
A few more leagues. We'll reach the shore
Before the coming night."

But night came on, a storm arose,
And not a ray of light
Remained to show the steersman how
To guide the ship aright.

"Where are the isles?" I called to Hope;
"Whereaway lies the land?"
Hope answered not. The breakers roared
And broke on every hand.

Then calm and sweet, the gentle voice
Of Conscience, the boatswain, called,
"Ahoy, all hands to work the ship—
Stand firm, you sailors all!"

Though weak and faint, Faith went aloft
And sweetly called to me:
"Trust your ship to the care of Him
Who rules the raging sea.

"You ne'er may reach Hope's mystic isle,
But there's a land more fair,
Though rocks may frown and wild storms rage,
He'll safely pilot you there."

SWEET SUMMER.

"I love you, I love you," I said to sweet Summer,
As, rose-crowned and lovely, she came like a queen,
And gladly I hastened to greet the new-comer
Who walked o'er the earth with so gracious a mien.

"Fare thee well, gentle Spring," I exclaimed, happy-hearted.
Then followed bright Summer without a regret,
Through woodlands, by seashore, o'er bee-haunted meadows
Where blossoms hung heavy, with pearly dew wet.

I sang with the wild birds, I laughed with the streamlet
That danced down the dingle and hurried away;
For why should I sorrow while shone the sun glorious?
Or why should I weep when all nature was gay?

We stood on the hilltop, the sun was declining,
I saw a faint shadow on Summer's fair brow;
Her smile had grown mournful. More closely I clasped her,
And softly I asked her, "What troubles thee now?"

"Because I must leave you," she answered me sadly.
"Leave the dear land where I've tarried so long;
My roses are withered, my song-birds are going;
Autumn is coming, and I must begone."

"Oh, leave me not, Summer," I cried in my sorrow;
But, ghost-like, she slipped from my clinging embrace;
And lo! from my vision she vanished forever,
And pensive-browed Autumn has taken her place.

Now, Autumn and I, through the russet woods wander,
Her pensive brow covered with leaves, red and gold;
Our path in the distance, frost-withened, awaits us;
The moon shines above us solemn and cold.

"Cease grieving," said Autumn, "rich treasures I bring you,
The grain that is garnered, ripe fruits from the bough.
Come, then, and enjoy the blessings she's left you,
And banish the cloud from your sorrowful brow."

THE NEW YEAR.

I am the baby New Year;
Fair, innocent and good,
If people will but use me
The way that people should.

Then will I be a blessing,
And never prove a curse,
But keep on growing better,
Instead of growing worse.

And I have gifts to offer,
Three hundred and sixty-five,
To everyone I'll give them,
As sure as you're alive.

As long as you are living
I'll give you seven a week,
But one at once, remember;
No use for more to speak.

Be careful how you use them;
Oh, keep them bright and fair,
They all are pure and perfect
When given to your care.

Let never one be wasted;
These gifts that I bestow
You cannot keep forever;
Enjoy them ere they go.

Then when to you I've given
The last one that I hold,
No more with you I tarry,
But, like a king grown old—

My subjects and my kingdom
I give unto the care
Of him that cometh after
My kingly crown to wear.

OLD WINTER.

What says Winter old to us,
Moaning through the branches bare,
Whispering sadly everywhere,
Like an old man garrulous?

Mourning for the dying year;
Ever telling, o'er and o'er,
Stories often told before,
That we wish no more to hear.

Sorrows that we've laid to rest,
He arouses from their sleep,
Where we covered them so deep,
Safely in each aching breast.

Talks to us of wasted days
That have vanished past recall;
He remembers one and all:
"They are lost, are lost," he says.

We are weary; Winter, cease,
Cease your sad and doleful tale;
Time that's lost no more bewail;
Sing a song of joy and peace.

Lo! he comes, the glad New Year;
Then be merry for awhile:
Greet the new king with a smile;
On his fair brow drop no tear.

BY THE OLD WATERFALL.

Oh, come let us go to the old waterfall,
Where blackbirds chatter and wood-doves call,
To the moss-covered log by the old oak tree,
Where you sat long ago, dear love, with me.
It was there you whispered the trembling "yes"
That made me aware of my happiness.
For springtime is come, and the willow bough
That droops o'er our seat is lovelier now
Then it was even then, when slowly down
Its bright leaves fell on your head like a crown.
Let us go where the bluebird's merry note
Is rippling in floods from his tiny throat;
The path lies temptingly fragrant and cool
Down through the woodlands and round by the pool,
Where the spray-sprinkled moss' emerald hue
Is starred with violets, yellow and blue,
There the blush on your cheek no one will espy,
Nor note the love-light that beams in your eye;
For nothing but fishes and bees and birds,
And the wayward breezes can hear our words.
From prying eyes safe in our trysting place,
You will dare once more to look in my face
And tell me the story I long to hear
All over and over again, my dear.

For none is there that will ever repeat
The stories we tell, though ever so sweet.
The breeze may whisper, it will not betray;
The brook, though it babbles forever away,
Will say not a word to people who pass,
But whisper it low to the reeds and the grass.
The birds will not tell—they've loves of their own—
So loving themselves, they'll let others alone;
So busy the bees, they never will speak
Of kisses I leave on your blushing cheek.

THE FAIRY'S BALLOON.

In the bygone years, when the fairy queen
Held her royal court in the forest green,
Her merry subjects—if stories are true—
When the moon shone bright, danced the long nights through.
But once on a time a very small elf,
Tired and sleepy, stole off by herself.
"I have danced enough," she said with a yawn;
"I should like to sleep from now until dawn;
And, lo and behold! what a treasure I've found,
A beautiful ball, soft, silky and round.
What a lovely place for a restful sleep;
While the dance goes on I will slyly creep
Away out of sight in that downy thing,
And rest while the frogs and the katydids sing."
So fairy Dozy, as good as her word,
Dove into the ball like a humming-bird.
Soon she was buried in silken sheets soft,
Fearless and bold as a sailor aloft.
While she was dreaming, a playful young Breeze
Awoke from his nap in the neighboring trees;
Feeling refreshed by his night's repose,
From his leafy bed he quickly arose;
Spying the thistle, he shouted in glee,

"Here is a thistle ball; now for a spree."
And never seeing the fairy at all,
He hastily grasped the beautiful ball.
Swift were his fingers to scatter afar,
Around and about and high in the air,
Seeds, with their white wings glimmering bright,
Sailing and floating away out of sight.
Beholding her then, as, drifting away,
Weeping, she called him, in wildest dismay:
"Oh, Breeze, naughty Breeze, see what you have done;
What are you about with your boisterous fun?
Why have you sent me away towards the moon,
In this dizzy old thistle-down balloon?"
"Your pardon I beg," the merry Breeze cried,
"I only intended to give you a ride.
Grant me the pleasure of shielding from harm
Yourself and your car, with my big strong arm;
I'll bear you away o'er the meadows green
And show you more sights than ever you've seen.
I have traveled much; many things I know;
Oh, beautiful fairy, please, will you go?"
She nodded her head in token of "yes,"
And away they flew like the "Fast Express,"
Right over the brook and away to the town;
Now sailing up high, now settling down;
On over the hills and over the dale,
Till the east grew red and the moon grew pale;
And slyly winking, the little stars fled,

And the great sun 'rose from his purple bed.
How the children laughed, and shouted, and chased,
Trying to grasp, in their eager haste,
The floating thistle-down, gleaming so bright,
Like silvery threads in the morning light.
And never a thought, had those children gay,
That fairy Dozy was flying away
On the gauzy wings of the thistle seed;
Such wonderful things they dreamed not, indeed.
But the fickle Breeze grew tired at last
And landed her car on the dew-wet grass.
Then up through the tops of the tall green trees,
Dancing and singing, away went the Breeze.
"Oh, dear," cried Dozy, "I think it's a shame;
But then, I suppose, I am most to blame.
I knew him of old for a silly elf,
Boastfully talking forever of self.
Too credulous I; too fickle was he;
Now, left alone, my folly I see."
Then up sprang Dozy and down to the brook,
Through rushes and ferns, her way she took,
Calling, "O Dragonflies, Dragonflies, come,
Take a poor fairy back to her home."
With spider-web ropes she harnessed her team;
Swift as an arrow they flew down the stream;
Soon was the fairy safe home with her friends;
So, my dear children, the long story ends.

SANTA CLAUS.

I had a funny dream last night;
I think I'll tell it you;
Perhaps you'll understand it all
When you have heard it through.

I dreamed an old man came to me—
His beard was long and white;
His cheeks were round and rosy, too;
His keen eyes sparkled bright.

He had a bundle in his arms,
And, Oh, a monstrous pack,
As big as any feather-bed,
Was strapped upon his back.

I did not ask the stranger's name;
No need of that, because
I knew the moment he came in
It must be Santa Claus.

He dropped his bundles on the floor,
Then wiped his nose and eyes,
And then he said, and shook his head,
"I'll have to advertise.

"I've worked alone for years, but now
I'll try another plan,
And have my agents everywhere,
Just like a business man.

"Though other people's business fail
Mine never does," said he;
"For every year when I come round
More little folks I see.

"I'll 'tend to everyone I can,
But what I want is this:
Good agents 'round in every town
To visit those I miss.

"And to supply the wants of such,
With bounteous hand and free;
I'll make it right, when pay-day comes,
If they will call on me."

I thought his plan was very good
Until, with sudden jerk,
He turned and said, "Your just the man,
Get up and go to work."

THE SHEPHERD.

From afar down the valley,
All sun-scorched and bare,
A shepherd came guiding,
With tenderest care,
His flock o'er the pathway
To pastures still green
On the high mountain plateaus,
Cool streamlets between.

So gently he called them,
While hasting along;
His voice was far sweeter
Than nightingale's song,
Calling, "Come follow,
Come follow, my sheep,
Up over the mountain tops
Rugged and steep."

When they strayed from the pathway,
Or loitered behind,
He lovingly chided,
His voice ever kind.
When weary ones faltered
He gave them his aid;
Bade the weak and the timid
To "be not afraid."

"I will never forsake thee;
Not one of my own
Will I leave here to wander
And perish alone.
Though dizzy the pathway
When viewed from below,
If you follow my footsteps
Then safely you'll go."

They know him; they love him;
The straying come back,
More closely they follow
The well-beaten track;
The timid ones, listening,
Forget their alarms,
While, contented, the lambkins
Rest safe in his arms.

"Oh, shepherd, kind shepherd,
Why pause not to rest?
You will faint with the burden
You bear on your breast."
He answers, still smiling,
"More precious than gold,
Are the sheep of my flock
And the lambs of my fold.

"Fierce wolves are in waiting
Along the rough way,
Eagerly watching
To seize on their prey;
And many a pitfall,
Whose brink is concealed
By tempting green herbage
And flowers of the field.

"My feet never weary,
My eyes never sleep,
While over the mountain
I go with my sheep;
I watch them at night time
And guide through the day,
That none from my flock
Shall be tempted away.

Then onward and upward,
The shepherd and sheep
Passed out of my sight, o'er
The hills high and steep;
But long did I listen
To hear his sweet tone,
Calling, "Follow, come follow,
I will care for my own."

I AM COMING HOME.

Dear mother and sister,
I'm coming home;
Just how or when
I cannot tell;
But, hour by hour,
And day by day,
I am nearing the ones
I love so well.

I've longed for you so
Since you went away;
The world without you
Has been so drear.
Did the angels need you
More than I,
That they took you away
And left me here?

I know you are gone,
Yet often I sit
And gaze down the road
You used to come:
And sometimes fancy
I see you flit
Along the path in
The twilight gloom.

The way may be rough
And the road be long,
And heavy the burdens
I have to bear;
But the time will come
When, my work all done,
I'll cross the dark river
To meet you there.

THE OLD HORSEMAN.

There's a man in this place, I'll not tell his name,
Though I think you will know him all the same,
By the doleful tune that he doth sing
Every fall and every spring.
"A horse! a horse!" you will hear him cry,
"Do you know of any old horse I can buy?

"I had a nice team, but one of them died,
Though each remedy heard of I faithfully tried;
It's left me with only one horse to my name;
He's a good old beast, but a little lame.
So tell me if you know of any old nag
That I can borrow, buy or beg."

This is the story you will hear him repeat
On lonely roads or the busy street;
He grows thin on the ribs and his face grows long
With singing this oft-repeated song;
Yet every spring and every fall
He sings this mournful song to all.

With twenty-five cents in his pocketbook
He travels all over the country to look
At every horse of which he can hear,
Be they cheap or be they dear.
And still he utters his pitiful cry,
"Do you know of any old horse I can buy?"

The horse he drives wears a look of woe—
It knows it is doomed and soon must go
To the land where all his old horses have gone;
Patient to the last he jogs along,
Saying "neigh" to his master's cry,
"Aint there a horse in this world I can buy?"

While his corn goes to grass and his farm to ruin,
He is racing around, old horses viewing;
And every year he buys three or four,
Yet every year he has to buy more.
With patience and zeal that never fail
He is still on the search for horses for sale.

AN AUTOGRAPH.

Written in my daughter Daisy's Autograph Album.

I.

My love for you, my precious daughter,
Is like unto a well of water;
Draw from its depths until you tire,
Its floods will meet you rising higher,
And growing sweeter by much using,
Through all your life their strength diffusing.

II.

I touch this book with loving fingers,
And o'er the page my slow pen lingers;
My thoughts are mixed, my ideas hazy,
So much I have to say, dear Daisy:
So much of love, so much of fun,
If I commenced I'd ne'er get done,
And so I'll leave you, dear, to guess
The thoughts that I cannot express.

NOT FORGOTTEN.

Written on the death of R. D. Chaffee, June, 1879.

Thou art gone, but not forgotten;
Thou hast left me here to weep;
But thy memory, dear and precious,
Ever in my heart I'll keep.
While I linger, broken-hearted,
In this world now full of woe,
I must mourn that we are parted,
We that loved each other so.

How I long to hear thy footsteps
Coming through the open door;
And thy voice, I listen for it,
But I'll hear them here no more.
Blessed feet, they now are treading
Joyfully the golden street;
Happy voice, that now is swelling,
Songs of praise at Jesus' feet.

Our dear children, how they miss thee!
How they need a father's care!
That they ever may be like thee
Is my constant, earnest prayer.
May the Lord that has bereft them
Be a father to them now!
May He teach us sweet submission,
That we to His will may bow.

Dearest Savior, Thou hast promised
Help to those that seek Thine aid;
Take my hand and lead me ever,
That I be no more afraid.
Time is hastening swiftly onward,
Bearing me from earth away;
But I know that I am ready
For those realms of endless day.

HALF-FORGOTTEN.

There's a charm for me in a dewy morn,
A dewy morn in the summer time,
When robin and thrush sing overhead
Sweet songs like some half-forgotten rhyme.
When through the dew-laden branches I see
The golden arrows of sunlight fall,
I seem to stand in the shadows deep
Of cherry trees bending over a wall.

And an old farm-house in the background stands;
There's a scent of mint in the morning breeze,
And over the wall, in the flowering shrubs,
A constant hum of honeybees.
A mite of a girl, I stand in the dew
And gaze at the fruit high over my head;
Then some one comes and gathers for me
The cherries all dewy, ripe and red.

This is all I can tell—but there's something more—
Something intangible, fair and sweet;
There was some one there with a loving smile,
And a tender story I cannot repeat.
I often think I can tell it all;
When I hear the song of robin and thrush
Ring loud and clear in the dewy morn,
The scene returns with a sudden rush.

Then memory grasps it and tries to hold
The scene till my pen can write it all,
But it melts away and I see but the house,
And the cherry tree bending over the wall.
O picture sweet of the olden time,
Come back, I pray, and linger awhile,
Till I learn the charm of that summer morn,
And the name of her with the tender smile.

THE CHARM.

You tell me your wife is a "terror,
Sour, crabbed and cross;"
That's only one side of the story;
There's two sides, Jack Ross.

Now, if you should ask my opinion
'Bout you and your wife,
The answer I'd give would surprise you,
You can bet your sweet life.

Want to know what I think of the matter;
You're welcome, I'm sure,
To my opinion, advice and, I reckon,
A pretty sure cure.

First, we'll go back to the beginning—
That's always my way,
When I want to find out all the trouble
And what is to pay.

I remember your wife pretty fairly
'Fore she hitched on to you:
She was pretty Serena Jane Marley;
Now, aint that all true?

That was long time ago—maybe twenty,
Maybe little less—
And she was as pert and as pretty
As your little Bess.

Her cheeks were as red as the roses;
Her eyes were as bright
As the fire-flies out in the meadow;
Heart merry and light.

And you thought her the pink of perfection,
And told her so, too,
And promised to love her forever,
So tender and true.

You called her an angel, a darling,
Your sweetest and best,
And thought you was pretty near Heaven
With her head on your vest.

Now, Jack, you needn't deny it;
I know how it went.
A man that can't court kinder sweet-like
Aint worth a red cent.

It was perfectly right and all proper
You should talk that way;
But I sorter surmise without asking
You don't talk so to-day.

Because she's grown fretful and snappish
You—well, never mind:
I can see where the trouble is, pardner,
Could see if I's blind.

You want her to grow young and pretty,
And gentle again;
Well, Jack, if you'll promise to try it,
I'll tell you a plan.

You see, I'm a kind of magician,
So I'll give you a charm;
Some lines to repeat when you meet her,
'Twont do any harm.

Say, "I love you, my darling, my sweetheart,
My blessing and pride;
Dear to my heart and more precious
Than all else beside."

Be sure, when these lines you're repeating,
To just naturally place
A kiss on her cheek—or a dozen,
And your arm 'round her waist.

If the charm doesn't work, you please tell me;
But honest, I b'lieve
That charm never failed since old Adam
First tried it on Eve.

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